

JONATHAN JAY

Founder of The Nationwide Alliance of Business Owners

OVERNIGHT SUCCESS



21 OVERNIGHT SUCCESS STORIES

21 businesses reveal the inspiring stories behind their overnight success

Overnight Success

**How 21 Small Business Owners
turned their fortune around in the
worst economic climate and without
investing a penny extra**

PLUS: The 21 Key Marketing Strategies You Can Use
Immediately To Save Yourself Time, Get More Customers,
Make More Sales And Turbo-Boost Your Profits

Jonathan Jay

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First published in 2011.

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ISBN 978-0-9566192-2-8

Printed in the United Kingdom by CPI Mackays Ltd, Chatham, ME5 8TD

A CIP Catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Introduction

At a time when many business owners considered downsizing their companies, a small group of extraordinary people decided they wouldn't allow an economic downturn stop them from achieving their goals.

These Charter Members of The Nationwide Alliance of Business Owners (NABO) defied the recession and did what they could to expand their businesses and grow their profits.

We're not talking about Sir Richard Branson-scale entrepreneurs who have budgets of millions and marketing departments – we're talking about people like you and me... people who have a business and know that it could and should perform far better than it has so far. People who want, and are prepared to do, what it takes to get a better quality of life for themselves and their loved ones.

In the following pages, you'll read about 21 of these people. Twenty-one highly-motivated individuals who have used what they've learnt from NABO to make dramatic improvements in their companies. At least three of them have used a couple of the marketing tactics to bring in over a quarter of a million pounds in new business.

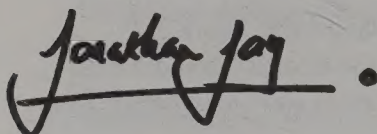
They've taken what they've learnt about web design, sales training, web marketing, direct marketing, copywriting, getting free publicity, lead generation, lead conversion, writing and business building to write books, form strategic alliances with new business partners, get publicity, reactivate dormant customers, start newsletters, raise their prices, negotiate better contracts with existing clients and generate tons of new leads and opportunities for their businesses.

And they've done it fast... sometimes in a matter of months! Actually, franchise owner Freddie Rayner was so inspired by what he learnt at his first NABO event, he took immediate action to use just one of the many techniques he discovered

and within days had earned a staggering £102,000. He's since earned an additional £364,000 using the same technique.

I'm proud to share their stories with you... and look forward to a day very soon when I'm sharing YOUR success story with other business owner!

Here's to your success!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Jay". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'J' and a dot at the end.

Jonathan Jay

Chairman and Founder

NABO - The Nationwide Alliance of Business Owners

**One simple NABO technique helps franchise owner win
12 contracts worth £364,000**

Freddie Rayner

When franchise owner Freddie Rayner set his goals for 2010, he was confident that with the success he'd already achieved thanks to NABO, he could secure at least three new franchisee contracts.

After being encouraged at his first NABO meeting to reactivate dormant leads, Freddie wrote to everyone who'd previously expressed an interest in becoming a franchisee and, within days, signed contracts worth £102,000. Besides current (active) customers, dormant customers represent the best group of potential sales for any company because they have already requested information or bought something.

Past customers often have no idea why they stopped purchasing a company's products or services and may be lured back with a special incentive or offer.

"I was told this strategy, that strategy, the next strategy and I literally burned them into my psyche, went away and immediately put them into practice," he says. "I heard it, I understood it, and I did it. I looked at previous applicants, and wrote to them again and said 'See what we have on offer now' – it was basically the same offer, but I had sharpened it up... I simply wrote them a letter and gave them a reason to respond and three people did. The difference there was that with immediate effect, I signed up three more franchisees, and that meant an actual bottom line of £102,000 worth of business."

However, Freddie's accomplishments since then put that achievement in the shade... for in a mere eight months, he has sold another 12 franchises worth over £364,000.

"My target for the whole year was to sell three new franchisees and so far and as a direct result of what I've learnt from NABO, I've sold 12. Each one pays £12,000 plus vat and then another £18,000 over the term of the five-year contract. In the franchising world, that is mega because these contracts are not inexpensive: we're talking about a substantial amount of money."

Since the majority of his franchisees opt to stay on past the five-year contract period, Rayner says he expects to make more than £364,000.

He is also confident that he can boost his 12-month results even further. ***"That's just eight months' worth. I've still got another four months."***

How has he done it? With a combination of online and offline tactics designed to capture the attention of prospects and then convert them into paying customers (signed-up franchisees).

The first step was to write a book - NABO members are encouraged to write a book about their specialist area and to use it to generate leads and to position themselves as experts in their markets. It was an easy step to take after the success of that first NABO recommendation, Freddie says. ***"I shot off to my place in Spain for a week and wrote it,"*** he recalls.

The book contained testimonials, including one from a British Franchise Association(BFA) legal representative. "That's a result of Jonathan Jay's input - he encouraged me to approach the BFA for a testimonial. I thought, 'There's no way he's going to come back to me' but he did - he came back with a glowing testimonial. I thought, 'Wow, this is absolutely fantastic.' It was then rushed off to print.

"That endorsement from the BFA made it appear even more credible."

The publicity campaign for the book was equally strategic. ***"I didn't spend silly money on adverts for my particular***

franchise. Instead, I placed small adverts asking people to look at my book before buying any franchise."

Freddie also hired NABO's Public Relations expert Paul Green to orchestrate a comprehensive and on-going PR campaign to promote the book to would-be franchise owners (including press releases to targeted industry publications, ezine articles, blogs and Twitter messages).

The PR campaign helped to grab the attention of would-be franchisees via the online and offline press releases, Tweets (messages on Twitter), blog postings, adverts in industry publications, and Pay Per Click advertisements, which were all designed to send them to a web lead page.

A lead page is a special standalone web page, with its own domain name (website address). Its sole purpose is to generate sales leads and capture the details of prospective customers.

On Freddie's lead page, prospects were encouraged to provide their postal addresses to receive a free copy of his book.

The published book, ***"Franchise Success, How To Make It Happen"***, has proven hugely popular with Freddie's target market.

"I've sent out email blasts telling people about the book and the next morning looked at my computer screen and seen anywhere from 150 to 180 requests in my inbox for the book," he says. ***"I then rush down to the post office and send them all out."***

In fact, demand is so high that he's just had to commission a second print run for another 1,500 copies.

More importantly, that interest has resulted in actual sales – so far, £364,000 in business.

That's because offering to mail people a free copy of the book enabled Freddie to collect the email and postal addresses of people who have a keen interest in owning a franchise.

He was then able to follow up the book with targeted direct response mailings.

"I follow them up if they reside in an area where I want a franchisee, for example, Southend or Warwick. In other areas, they're just welcome to have a free book. I'm building up a database, and eventually I'll send them details about other franchise operations I'm considering.

"I'm applying the same techniques over and over again now. Until NABO, I sort of knew about a lot of this, but now I'm actually putting it all into practice. That's what counts. I'm doing less and getting more. And there is new information as well, which is quite exciting."

When he signed up to become a NABO member, Freddie was already a very successful business owner – his franchise had won an HSBC Bank 'Business of the Year' Award and been featured on the BBC television programme, Working Lunch. He had more than 165 franchisees serving 12,000 clients a week across the UK and earning about £100,000 a year each.

The trouble was Freddie had lost enthusiasm for his business.

"I was disenchanted with my business because it wasn't producing what I had led myself to believe it could. I didn't really know where my business was going. It was doing okay but I knew it could do better."

Before joining NABO, Freddie had been using the services of two business consultants, but they hadn't made much difference to the company's success.

"I was floundering, surrounded by consultants who were only interested in their own invoices. They'd come in, give me their invoices, chat to me about their golf handicaps, and then leave and I was £2,000 lighter each month. I hadn't got an inkling about what I was paying for. Worse than that: I didn't have one consultant, I had two! They pushed me to take on more staff, bigger offices..."

A private consultation with NABO's Chairman Jonathan Jay helped Freddie get back on track.

"Jonathan helped me realise there was a definite blockage in my business, and it was caused by me. That was a revelation. When I thought about what he said, I started to put into practice the solutions he suggested.

"He was right – he asked me if I went into the office every day with the right mental attitude wearing the right clothes, prepared to do business. The answer was 'No'. I was brassed off with nothing happening. I just put out adverts that weren't working much and blamed the fact people weren't responding to adverts.

"I suddenly realised 'Hey, I've got to do something ... I've got to sharpen everything up. I had to go back through everything and realise that a lot of things were just slipping through my fingers.

"It's not until you realise where you are going wrong that you can put things right, when someone says 'Look you're going wrong because you're on the wrong road... turn around, go back and set off on the right route.'

"I was pretty fed up, down in the dumps and I'm certainly not that any more. I've got enthusiasm in bucket loads, and that's what you need to be successful in business."

He also acted on Jay's advice to downsize. "Now I work from home – I have no staff, no office, and I'm doing miles better and the money is mine. Not everyone can do that of course but when you can... Cor, what a relief.

"I would definitely wholeheartedly recommend other business owners give NABO a try. Signing up for the Business Development Programme is the best investment business-wise that I've ever made.

"It helps you to realise what running a business is all about. It's not what I thought it was about – going into a nice office with fish tanks and flowers everywhere with assistants filing their nails for 25 grand salaries.

"I can do anything I like now, and I have much more money as a result and that's the whole point of having a business, so I'm told. You tend to forget that when you're doing it day to day.

"To say I'm pleased with what I've learnt is an understatement. I'm still attending the NABO Business Development Programme. I am putting it all into practice, and it has made a big difference to me, and I would highly recommend that people who want to be in business, stay in business and make a success of business, take on board what they hear at the Business Development course."

Retail consultancy makes £51,000 in three days with one NABO strategy

Craig Ramsay

Using just one of the many gold nuggets he extracted from attending NABO events, Company Director Craig Ramsay says his company Retail Performance Specialists (RPS) made £51,000 in three days.

RPS consultants work across a spectrum of retail stores from multi-national retail giants, to small one-person independent shops. We go in and work out what they are doing well and what they are doing less well in their retail businesses and then offer them advice as to how they can improve their sales performance, explains Craig.

After attending a weekend NABO seminar last year, Craig decided to sign up for NABO's Business Development Programme which offered 12 one-day events spread across a year.

I attended three one-day events but unfortunately because of other commitments, I had to drop out. Even going along to those three was enough for me to be able to extract a lot of golden nuggets and get a lot of things I could put into practice. Even though I hadn't gone through the whole programme I got a lot of strategies that I could implement straight away.

"I came away with five or six key things and thought 'Okay I can adapt these and make them work for my business. The key thing was to follow through. Besides money-making strategies, Craig also learnt ways to save money in his business, grow the company database, write copy, use social media effectively and get the most from testimonials. He is also using all of what he learned in his own new about-to-be-launched business Planet Soccer, an online sports and fashion website.

The biggest money-making strategy Craig learned was offering a free taster day to prospective RPS clients. "The first key insight that switched me onto what I needed to be doing better to market any given business was using the market product funnel."

The theory behind the marketing product funnel is that you need to provide prospects with an opportunity to experience your services or products at different price points. Many service professionals struggle to convert prospects directly into high paying clients. They make the mistake of trying to sell high-end services without first developing a relationship with prospective clients and they only offer a high priced service without any lower priced options.

The marketing product funnel encourages you to offer something for free to entice as many people as possible to get to know, trust and like you and your product or service and then gradually lure them into becoming paying customers by offering slightly more expensive products or services.

"One of our products is a £3,000 six-month business building programme for independent retailers. We guarantee customers a 10% lift in sales or we return their money.

"We were going straight to the marketplace trying to close a £3K programme up front. Once I understood the market funnel methodology, the key thing was to go down to the market with low cost products and to take people through the journey from the lowest to the highest price point item, paying programme, product or service.

"As a result, I came back from NABO and we worked out what low cost product or service we could send out to the marketplace just to get people on the first rung of the ladder.

"Jonathan Jay (NABO's Founder) suggested taking our back-end programme and giving it away to our prospects for free, so all they had to do was cover the cost of their lunch. We ran full, free day events and showed them the tools

and techniques we would use on the full business-building programme.

"This is a very effective approach to closing people onto a training programme. The response in terms of closing people in some cases doubled."

Craig also changed the way he approached prospects. "We had only used traditional marketing methods in the past to try and attract people to sign up for the programme. We would use direct mail or telesales to contact them and try to get them into the room so we could show them what we do on the programme.

"We had been sending out sales letters of about two or three pages because we thought the shorter the better but I learnt from Jonathan that's not the case as long as the content is relevant, people will read the full eight-page letter. So for the first time we sent out a full eight-page sales letter, and the response was great... we had 30 businesses in the room for that first business-building programme.

"We closed an extra eight businesses on top of what we would normally close. So that's an extra eight businesses at £3,000 - a total of £24,000 - from one free day.

"We have run two more free days following that approach. Our numbers reduced slightly but again we were still doubling what we'd normally get. On the second free day, we got an additional four businesses at £3,000 each so that was another £12,000 and on the third, we got an extra five businesses at £3,000 so there's £15,000.

"Moving the back end to the front end and running free taster days we can say quite comfortably that was an extra £51K on what we'd normally get."

The company has also introduced a low-priced product.

"We've produced what we call a 'Mini Retail Diagnostic' which costs about £500 which is obviously a significant price difference from our £3,000 product. It's more agreeable to

prospects and we can demonstrate what we offer. We've only just started to do that in the UK. The guys in our Sydney office took this idea on a lot faster than we did because we were doing a lot of other stuff... they've been able to close seven businesses at \$9,000 so that's \$63,000 they've been able to close using that low cost diagnostic product. And they are all clients that might otherwise have not signed up for the full business-building programme because they either didn't see the value of it or it was too big a step for them to buy the \$9,000 programme."

NABO also inspired Craig to reinvigorate the company's database. "We had a database with about 2,000 names and a lot of great data and a lot of great companies on it but it was lying dormant. No one had used it in years and years. So the first thing I did when I came back from the NABO event was to write 10 e-shots and start a monthly e-newsletter. I've been sending that out for the past six months.

"Once I got into the flow of doing it and I could see the benefits of doing it, I thought I needed to add something more valuable to it. So we approached a number of retail associations that we work with and offered them a series of market reports. We used the tactic whereby they sent details of the reports in their newsletter to their databases. There's a clickthrough from their newsletter to our website. The prospects are then on our landing page and register and we are able to capture their details.

"I've sent out three market reports and each time I've been able to add about 100 new prospects onto our database.

"As a result of the emails, newsletter and joint venture activity, we're adding about 200 people each month to our database. The beauty of doing joint venture with the retail associations is that their subscribers are all our target market. It's very unlikely that there's anybody in their database who is not a retailer and not looking to improve their business in some way."

He also learned the value of the information RPS was offering for free on its website. "RPS has always produced really ground-breaking market reports but we were making the mistake of publishing and housing them on our website so that anybody could come along and get all of those market reports for free without providing their contact details. I decided we were giving away too much great information away for nothing... We needed to get something back for this information so we made sure the 10 market reports were housed behind a secure password entry. It meant anyone who came onto our website had to register for them first. So, although we were still giving away the information, we were getting their personal contact details in exchange for that. That's made a difference as well."

Craig also enhanced the company's website media page to make the most of the publicity the company has attracted since it was established 15 years ago. "The company has been mentioned in a lot of newspaper articles. I write a lot of articles for national and international magazines within retail. We listened to NABO, and made the media page on our website a lot better."

"The website also features customer testimonials now. We were dabbling in testimonials but they weren't a big thing for us because we didn't think through the value of them... but I learnt from Jonathan how powerful they can be, so we're now asking people at our free events to write testimonials at the end of the programme. It's part of the criteria of them coming along, whether they decide to work with us or not. We are using the testimonials far more effectively on our marketing collateral."

Besides making money, Craig also discovered ways to save money by writing his own sales and website copy. "The feedback I've had from experienced marketers is that I've picked this up really well. I have sent out about 40 sales letters, newsletters and e-shots and I would say conservatively that over the past six months, it's saved us about £6,000 in copywriter's fees."

He's also using Jonathan's recommendations for saving time.

"I was finding that sending regular e-shots to the database was very time-consuming, managing the bounce backs and returns, so we outsourced that side of it to an email marketing company. They take the copy that I write and set the templates and make sure it gets emailed and they cleanse the database. It's probably saved us one day a week if you extrapolate that across a year. That's a lot of time-saving."

And Craig has used what he learned from NABO about building a database to grow his new company Planet Soccer's database to 2,000 names.

"This was one of the key things for me: Jonathan said 'It's all very well believing that you have something great to sell but you need a database to talk to.' I took that on board and I spent a lot of time not only building the Planet Soccer website but also developing the database. Next week, we'll be launching Planet Soccer and we already have a 2,000-strong database to go to as soon as it's launched."

"The database came through contacting what I perceived to be my target market. I did that by going online and because it's a cross-over between sports and fashion, I was able to go to magazines and industries and contact people and say 'I've got this website that I'm going to launch and wonder if we could do some sort of affiliate project where you give me access to your database in return for something I can offer. It was mutually beneficial."

"I also used the fantastic resource called 'social media' and I targeted people on Facebook and Twitter. I must spend something like three hours a day on Facebook and Twitter, just connecting with people, specifically targeting people who are going to be in my target audience. The world of social media is great for that because it's not random targeting – it's specific because you have profiles of people on Facebook and you know that they're going to be the right people to speak to."

Accountancy association attracts 1,000 qualified leads in four months

Mark Wickersham

The AVN accountancy association had been using marketing for many years when owner and CEO Mark Wickersham recruited new Head of Marketing, Sue Davenport. Together they attended a NABO event and the new techniques they learnt have helped bring in the best leads the company has ever had.

In just four months, those techniques have brought in more than 1,000 qualified leads.

AVN is the UK's sixth largest accountancy group. It offers its members resources (including seminars and events), tools and support to help themselves and their clients become more successful and profitable.

"We've always done a lot of marketing –that's helped us grow from nothing, 12 years ago, to now where we turnover between five and six million pounds a year," says Mark. "I'd say we're pretty good with marketing, but the stuff we've learnt from NABO is practical and simple to put in place."

What's more, it works. "The thousand leads we've generated in the past four months are all far better leads than we've ever had before. We've always had processes to capture leads and still have those but, as these are qualified leads, the new ones will be more valuable to us."

The new techniques he and Sue learnt included setting up an automated online lead generation process. "That was how to set up lead pages, how to use a book as a 'golden carrot', and how to create an automatic process to capture sales leads off the back of the lead page."

A key part of the automated lead generation process is the offer of an irresistible 'golden carrot' to prospects – something

so tempting that they're willing to provide their email address to get their hands on it. In Mark's case, the golden carrot was a free book on tax credits.

"Writing a book was on my list of things to do but kept slipping down the list. I think going to the NABO event in July and seeing how a book could be used to generate sales leads really made me give it some focus. Even though I'd always fancied writing a book, I wasn't really sure why I wanted to write one and didn't know what the benefits would be. NABO was the catalyst – following the seminar I just decided to take action and get on with it."

"I found it very easy to follow the formula of writing the book, creating the lead page, and being able to outsource the design of the landing page – we could have done it ourselves but it would have taken us months. It was a four-week process from sitting down to start writing the book to having the whole thing up and running."

That book has so far generated 456 sales leads for AVN. Since then, Mark's written a booklet on pricing (which has attracted 152 leads) and a research report on the accounting profession (which has brought in 480 leads).

"I also had a feature, based on the latter research report, published just a few weeks ago in Accountancy magazine, which is the biggest trade publication in our business, and that generated over 200 leads. The article came about when my business partner, who writes a lot of articles for the accountancy press, was talking to the Editor and said I could write a report on best practices in this research survey."

Mark's next book is about pricing and it will be printed in the next few weeks. "The booklet on pricing was a stopgap because we were using it to promote a two-day marketing event. I had written most of the book but we decided we'd write a booklet to put in place a process to generate sales leads for that event. The booklet wasn't ready in time for the event itself so we've not really pushed it yet which is why

it's only generated 152 sales leads so far. I'm really waiting until the book gets published, as that will be a much more valuable golden carrot."

"The books and research report have also helped AVN boost its joint venture activity", says Mark.

"We had been doing joint ventures for a few years and we've generated some good results from working with them but until we started writing books and so on, we never had anything to give to our joint venture partners' customers. But in the last three or four months, having got the books and lead pages in place we now have something concrete to offer. It's working in terms of generating quantifiable benefits through the sales leads."

"As a result of NABO and the lead generation process, over the last three or four months we've maximised the potential of the joint ventures. For example, one of our joint venture partners is one of the leading suppliers of insurance in the accountancy marketplace and once a quarter, they produce a tax newsletter. I contacted them and asked them if I could write an article on tax credits and offer all their customers a free book. They said 'Yes' so I wrote a short, one-page article for their newsletter and put a free offer at the end of it with the lead page's web address. That article generated 95 leads. I'm just about to write another article for that particular organisation."

"One of our new joint venture partners is Lexis Nexis – which, along with a company called CCH, dominates the market in providing accountants with journals and online technical information. They own Taxation magazine, one of the leading tax journals, and they've agreed to let us produce an article on tax credits which will be published across two different issues. We'll use it to promote the lead page."

"That article hasn't yet been published but it's another example of how we're tapping into our joint venture partners because we've now got something that we can offer. We've

now got a process to generate sales leads off the back of articles. From our joint venture partner's point of view, they look good because they're offering something of value to their customers."

Now that the automated lead generation process is in place, AVN is focusing on converting those leads into customers. A few weeks ago, the company paid for a consultant to show them how to do it most effectively.

"Until then, we'd been reliant on the follow-up email process but it became apparent that we needed to do more than that so we've just started – literally this week – a telesales process of working through the sales leads to drive those people to our various courses. It's early days but I suspect in a month or two from now, we'll start to have some statistics about how many of those sales leads we've managed to use to generate bookings for our events. Once we know that, it's going to be easier to estimate impact on turnover, because we've been running events for many years and we have a pretty good idea of what conversion rates we get."

"I would guess that in the next 12 months, we will have another four or five thousand sales leads. I'd like to think that across those four or five thousand sales leads, 20% come to one of our events. If we get 20% - which would be about 1,000 people - to the event and our conversion at events is roughly a third, that would be about 300 customers. It depends on what they actually buy from us – it could be anything from a £1,000 sale up to an £8,000 sale. If you work the numbers through, it could be quite significant." In other words, if Mark's projections come true, AVN could add anywhere from £300,000 to £2.4 million to its turnover, thanks to that online lead generation process.

NABO lunch nets one consultant over £100,000

Frances Tolton

NABO Member Frances Tolton, owner of Second Sight Development & Training, was given takeaways from her NABO mentoring lunch, which have already brought in over £100,000.

Spending a couple of hours developing a strategy for your business with multimillionaire marketing expert and NABO Chairman Jonathan Jay is just one of the perks of being a NABO Gold member – and for business consultant, Frances Tolton, the rewards from that one-on-one mentoring session keep coming – so far, it's helped her win contracts worth over £100,000 and rising.

Tolton, who owns a successful business consultancy in Ireland - Second Sight Development & Training - attended her one-on-one business strategy lunch with Jay in London.

"Jonathan's advice changed my mind about the direction I was going in – I had spent many years helping other people to promote their businesses and make money. That lunch made me realise I had to start putting effort into promoting my own business."

"It also changed my thinking about the way I approached my business – from treating it like a hobby to treating it like a business."

Inspired, Frances began to take action the moment she sat down on the flight back to Ireland.

"I set a few action goals which I addressed straight away. I made a firm decision that I was going to focus on developing my business and making money for me. I know that seems pretty basic, but it was a turnaround for me."

Once she was back in her office, Frances and her husband (and business partner) Liam, wasted no time in acting on those goals.

"Within a few days of meeting with Jonathan, we were invited to make contact by the LinkedIn business network. Within the day, we were asked for a quotation for a piece of work, which ended up yielding us £15,000 and a continued contract with the client. Not bad for a Friday morning and two emails!"

Jay's advice – to find out what customers actually wanted – proved to be crucial, says Frances. "I had been offering training in a number of areas which I love and am passionate about. I was convinced that's what everybody wanted."

The research she and Liam conducted after the NABO lunch showed otherwise.

"We rang every client on our books, both past and present, and asked them what they wanted. We said, 'If you had money to spend on training, what type of training would you spend it on?' Seventy-nine percent said 'Attitudinal training and technical skills.' I began calling "top 100" companies in Ireland and got the same answer. What's more, we realised we could do both – me with my background in psychology and Human Development and Liam with his amazing track record as a consulting engineer. We were unstoppable and NABO helped us realise this!"

As it happened, Frances had just published a book about attitudinal change, thanks to the advice she had received at her first NABO meeting.

"At that first meeting, Jonathan put a lot of emphasis on the power of writing a book. I was in the early stages of doing just that, so I got cracking and published 'The Rainbow Factor: Seven Steps to Life Engagement' for people who find it difficult to set and achieve their goals." "RAINBOW" is an acronym for Reflect, Assess, Initiate, Name, Believe, Optimise, and Work with focus. Within two months, the book was published."

"By the time I went to the next NABO event, I had sold 600 copies. I've now sold over 1,000 copies. The business started to roll in – following the advice of NABO's PR Expert Paul Green – I got my face out there and the clients came."

"In Ireland, the state of the economy has had a big impact on people's attitude and morale. This book is perfect for helping people to get their heads together, set their goals and achieve them by recognising and answering their calls to action."

"Putting what I believed down on paper and getting my face on the cover of a book was just the first step."

Frances also got on prime-time TV in Ireland. "I was signed up for a six-part prime-time TV show with our national station - RTE. Again, it was all about answering calls to action.

"At the lunch, Jonathan talked about creating a pamphlet version of my book and sending it to prospective clients for free. When I got back to Dublin, I created a pamphlet version of the book and found a printer who was interested in partnering on the basis of getting the work for the production of a "Seven Steps to Life Engagement" training programme for a recommendation with the new clients to do their work."

With what Frances had learned from that NABO Gold Member lunch, she was then ready to take the next step: to find more clients and expand her business.

"I just had to find out where the money was. I knew that training budgets were scarce but my research revealed that once we could provide exactly what the clients wanted, they were willing to spend whatever resources they had with us at Second Sight Training."

She decided to meet face to face with anyone who had the resources and offered a free presentation. They also got a free pamphlet of the book and an offer for a training day for as many people as they could put in a room.

"The deal was that they could put as many people in the room as possible, but they had to provide the venue. It turned out that due to staff cover at present most companies could only free up a maximum of 15 people away from their desks at any one time. This instantly multiplied training days and had the power to multiply the business tenfold in some situations."

Eleven agencies each paid £1200 per group per day.

"The total number of groups from those 11 was 22 – which is how I made the first €33,000 (about £27,000) – it was a ridiculous amount of training days for me to deliver, and I was run off my feet. Therefore, I offered to train their trainers at €750 (just over £600) per person and said they could buy the materials but train their own staff in their own centre. Between them, they put 14 trainers on a two-day 'Life Engagement' trainer's programme - which earned me another €10,500 (about £8,500). From there on, the clients did the marketing. Basically, they did the work for me... they got the people, and they started to multiply it onwards."

Another seven companies signed up for training days. "I repeated the process and between them, they produced 10 groups and six trainers. I hired two very good trainers who did a great job for a reasonable fee of €500 (approximately £400) a day based on getting multiple days, and I increased the price of the day to €2000 (about £1,600) if they wanted me to deliver the programme.

"Then... magic! State funding became available to companies wanting to do this training for their staff and managers. I contracted another two trainers, and I focused on training the trainers."

The word continues to spread...

"I took a stand at an entrepreneurs' exhibition in Dublin and caught the attention of Telko House, the franchisee for Sky HD in Ireland and a number of other very high profile agencies. A month later, I delivered a two-day high-powered

Sales Success Programme for Telko House and Sky HD at the 5-Star Dromoland Castle in the west of Ireland."

"That's thanks to Jonathan's advice to find the type of marketing you are best at and invest first in that – we know that without a doubt, face to face marketing is our strength! We have taken part in three exhibitions – all yielded business well in excess of the investment."

And the clients and opportunities keep coming in...

"Following our first quarter success, we decided to focus in on the fantastic advice provided through NABO's monthly journals – in particular, the preparation and presentation of tenders. We followed Paul Green's advice on the structure and direction of a business tender, exploiting two key pieces of advice – professional presentation and letting the client know you understand their needs. We went on to win a training contract for 140 people surpassing three very reputable competitors who had actually tendered at a lower price. Our client advised us that our tender stood out for those very reasons."

"We listened carefully to a Tuesday evening NABO webinar and learned about creating multiple streams of income. We immediately went to our current clients and asked a simple question – 'What else can we do for you?' Almost every client had something else they needed. NABO helped us realise there was more business right under our noses – we just needed to ask."

"We also took note of a niche marketing tip from [NABO's Web Marketing Expert] Ed Ravis – just for fun we decided to focus in on people over 50 who were considering retirement. Our Goal Mapping Programme which we deliver in Ireland for Brian Mayne was a sell out in Dublin."

"We just keep seeing these opportunities as calls to action and thanks to NABO and Jonathan's guidance, we are ready to answer those calls. When one or two of the opportunities coming up really click, we are looking at an even bigger success story for 2011."

NABO has played a large part in Frances's achievements.

"NABO has given me a bigger vision – and helped me to reach for greater and more ambitious business opportunities. It's given me the freedom to think bigger and to stop being satisfied with the regular fare."

"I halved my hours and doubled my profits last year and I'd never done that in all the years I've been in business."

John Haslam

John Haslam's workdays are probably half as short as they were before he joined NABO 15 months ago but now they're twice as profitable.

"Last year, I set myself a target to double my profits, and I did. I doubled my profits and I'd not done that in all the years I've been in business," reports John, the owner of two companies, Jevs Magazine and Leaflet Distribution and home cleaning franchise Molly Maid. "This year, I want to put another 50% onto that. From where I was when I joined NABO, it will be a 300% increase if I achieve that this year. In fact, I'd already done a quarter of that in the first month of this year because of renegotiating my contracts with my current clients."

"You look and think that it's impossible to double your business in this current climate, and yet I did it. It's all about having the tools to make things happen and having the time to think about my business – I now spend all my days doing marketing. That's all I do."

It's a far cry from when he attended his first NABO event. Back then he was "working 18 hours a day, six days a week and collapsing on Sundays". Worse, he had almost no cash flow because he was too preoccupied with networking, delivering his product and taking phone calls to send out and chase up invoices. He had no time left to follow up the leads he received from networking events or to use the marketing techniques he'd found to be successful in the past.

"I was chasing my tail because I wasn't getting the bills out fast enough," admits John. He knew he needed to change the way he was doing things but didn't know how. When he heard about "The Marketing Secrets of a Multi-Millionaire Entrepreneur" written by NABO's Founder Jonathan Jay, he

immediately ordered a copy. Inspired by what he read, he ordered NABO's marketing CDs and DVDs and then attended an introductory Business Building weekend.

A few months later, in December 2009, he joined NABO's Business Development Programme. "I went to the first meeting presented by NABO's PR Expert Paul Green. We spent the first couple of hours describing our businesses and where we wanted them to go."

No one in the room that day could believe that John could manage to run two full-time businesses on his own as he had been trying to do for more than 10 years. "Paul asked me how I'd done it. And the answer was 'Very badly.'"

Paul said, *'You can carry on the way are, basically stressed up to your eyeballs and working 18 hours a day, but if you want to build your businesses, you must change the way you're doing things.'*

He committed to making three major changes immediately: to systematise and outsource his business procedures; to get an administrative assistant; and to move out of his home office and into a rented office.

"I stopped getting any direct phone calls and that saved me about 16 hours a week. I employed someone to take care of all the paperwork for both businesses - all the billing, the admin - and that freed up another 10 to 12 hours a week of my time."

No longer exhausted, he could begin working on the business instead of in it.

Moving into a rented office also helped boost his productivity, he says. *"I'd worked from home for nearly 15 years so it felt quite strange. Leaving the house to go to work completely alters your brain."*

Once he made those changes, the orders rose and the profits followed.

"It was as if somebody just turned a tap on," admits John. He had to take on four new full-time staff because he was swamped with work.

At his second Business Development Programme meeting, John was advised to reintroduce all the successful marketing methods he'd used in the past.

"I used to do a lot of cold calls to premises and send out 100 'cold call' letters a week to businesses, offering my services, and it had worked very well but I stopped because I found it was taking up so much of my time, and I found networking to be easier."

"I now know that I made a major mistake in stopping what was successful."

He's gone back to sending 100 sales letters out each week (using the direct response techniques he learnt from NABO) and introduced an automated follow-up process. The difference is that instead of John spending five hours a week typing letters and addressing the envelopes, he now has an administrative assistant to do it for him.

"My assistant isn't allowed to leave the office until she's done 100 cold call letters every single week because it brings me new, different clients that I can't get any other way."

He also discovered a way to make his networking more effective.

"In the past, I was going to networking events, getting a lot of leads and interest but didn't have time to follow up. Now, networking is becoming more profitable because I follow the leads through."

The NABO technique that had the most impact however is niche marketing. "That has been the biggest success of the whole lot. I pick just one industry, think of a reason why I should write to them and then give them an offer they'll find hard to turn down."

"I sent my first letter to about 56 health clubs and gyms in the Northampton area. I picked up six new clients as a result. The whole exercise took about half an hour, cost £56, and I made £1,000 profit."

"That encouraged me... so I then did the next one to another niche market, and it cost £30 and made £700 profit."

"The next stage was following everything up properly because I hadn't been doing that. As things started to turn around, my confidence grew – I wasn't a bad salesperson before but when you're totally confident in your product, you go in knowing you're going to get the deal."

He also created two brochures to promote his products and services, using the copywriting techniques he'd learnt from NABO. "Both brochures cost me a total of £100 in print costs. I designed them myself and I send one of them out with my invoices. About 98% of them get thrown in the bin. But I get phone calls back from my current clients, and they say, 'I've just noticed you do so and so.' I might have told them 20 times, but they don't listen. When they get the brochure however, it reminds them."

Another big change was to set up a website to promote Jeves Magazine and Leaflet Distribution.

"At last I have a website. It's not perfect but it's working, and I'm already picking up business from it. Within a week of going live, we got three new clients. I was shocked. It wasn't that I didn't believe it could work, but I'd run my business for many years without a website."

"I thought it would probably bring me some enquiries eventually. When it went live, I looked at it and thought, 'It's not how I want it. It's not doing everything I was told to do at NABO – there's spelling mistakes and errors on it and there's all sorts of bits I don't like', but I couldn't carry on any longer without a website. We had to start somewhere so we got this thing up, and it is bringing in enquiries. I've now started work on a Pay Per Click campaign, and I had a special report that

I'm going to offer. I'm going to start writing a blog, do special offers and create a newsletter too. I want to get that to start to pay because it's obviously a quick and easy way to get to market."

After making those big changes and boosting his profits, John has now begun to focus on other ways to improve his business. "I've done the big stuff – I've reorganised what I do, I've got the office, I've got the assistant and the website, and now I've got the time to use all the techniques that I haven't yet done. My project for the next couple of months is to get my website tidied up and to get my online marketing and email marketing working."

"Because I wanted to grow the business rapidly last year, I chose those marketing tactics which were going to give me the quickest results. With a little of luck and a bit of concentration I managed to build it up without having to do lots of things. This year, I'm going to continue using the methods I used last year but start adding all the other marketing techniques I've learnt."

"The speaker at the last NABO event gave us a one-page marketing plan... and it hit home straight away. I went back to my hotel that night and drew up my one page plan, and we've been working through it since I came back. I have a list of 21 marketing tactics that I want to use this year, and I plan to introduce one each week and test the results."

"If it doesn't cost me very much to try, and it brings me one extra client a year, then it's worth it. If I do that with 21 different things then that's 21 new clients."

He's set up a joint venture with a print company and is now selling their services too. "I'm also working with another joint venture company on an email marketing system which again I'm starting to use myself and offering it as part of my marketing package."

"This week, I've just set up a referral system. Yesterday I spent three hours sitting with the owner of a leaflet and distribution

company in Milton Keynes. He's got a system I want. We've agreed at the meeting that he's going to license his system to me and in return, I'm going to give him some information that I have. I'm going to promote his print company for him. I'll be one of his affiliates, if you like. These are the things you're able to do when suddenly you've got loads of time."

"Joining NABO was the best thing I've ever done, and I wish it had been available many years ago. From my point of view, it's been a massive success. But it ain't going to happen if you don't put the work in. I've been on many, many courses where I've listened and never used what I learnt because it didn't click. That's the big difference – I made the decision back in December 2009 that whatever I was taught I was going to make it work, and I did. I took action."

Writing a book helps holiday lettings company triple sign-ups

Wendy Shand

Tots To Travel was already a successful company before its owners Wendy and Rob Shand joined NABO, but when they took the advice of NABO's Chairman Jonathan Jay and wrote a book to promote the company, its growth dramatically accelerated.

The multi-award winning company has been helping parents find child-friendly holidays (including cottage holidays, half-term holidays, baby-friendly holidays and single-parent holidays) in the UK, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and France for the past four years.

Since 2006, Wendy Shand and her team have won five awards including the celebrated Customer King Award for Excellent Customer Service 2010; Practical Parenting 'Business Parent of the Year' Award 2009; BT 'Essence of the Entrepreneur' Award; the Mother@Work 'Mumpreneur' Award and was Highly Commended in the 'Remote Worker' Awards 2009 and shortlisted for the Everywoman Award.

"Our business was already doing really well with a growth rate of 80% per annum but we had ambitious plans for it and we needed some fairly out of the box approaches to scale it up – NABO has given us the techniques and confidence to achieve our global aspirations," says Wendy.

"It wasn't until we had a session with Jonathan that we realised how pivotal writing a book was to the peak positioning of the business. He gave us the strategy and demystified it. He made it seem possible and achievable. And indeed I realised how easy it would be to do, with a little bit of application really."

"I realised there was no time to waste. I could have fiddled around doing some of the other marketing stuff, but actually the biggest element of it was to actually write the book."

Within a month, Wendy had written a book "Empty Weeks? How To Get More Bookings & Make Money From Your Holiday Home".

Demand for the book has been high – in just one 24-hour period, for example, Wendy mailed over 200 copies of it. "That has directly transferred into over 30 house owner enquiries that we are now processing," she says, explaining that each property must meet the company's strict 'family friendly' safety requirements. "We've put 18 new house owners onto the website within the last three months. This is three times more than normal. That represents £1,000 per property per year and since house owners tend to stay on the books for at least 10 years, that's £10,000 for each property. And we've achieved that within a short period of time."

"The book has definitely increased the number of house owners on our list."

"A book is a huge positioning tool; it's a credibility tool that sets you up as the only expert in your field. And there's a big PR element to it too. For example, the Daily Telegraph committed a freelance journalist to write an article about me, about the book and about the holiday lettings market."

Wendy is no stranger to publicity – since starting her company in 2005 after her son nearly drowned in an unfenced swimming pool at a French holiday property and she realised there was an urgent need to provide families with small children and babies with safe, genuinely family friendly holidays - she has been profiled in broadsheet newspapers, glossy magazines, business books, on radio and on TV, most recently the BBC's Money Programme 'Mum's the Business'. She's become a highly respected holiday lettings

expert, a commentator on family travel, is seen as a role model and mentor for women in business and is a regular speaker and judge on business awards panels.

Since Wendy and her husband joined NABO's Business Development Programme, the company has benefited from many of the other marketing techniques they've learnt, including advertising, web-based marketing, publicity and sales.

Encouraged by NABO's Chairman, Wendy decided to use magazine inserts on a small scale (placing 10,000 inserts for about £1,000) in a magazine that catered to one of the company's niche markets, families with twins or multiple births.

She chose the official magazine of TAMBA (Twins & Multiple Births Association) and it proved to be very successful: placing an advertising insert into the niche parenting magazine brought 300 new customers in eight weeks.

"We've now got 300 new people on our database – that's 300 new people to talk to on a regular basis and build a relationship with."

"I know now that inserts aren't risky. We didn't make a huge amount on our first insert but we know it works. We know we can cover our costs and there's potential to make profits from it."

"I know too it's a strategy that can be applied in all sorts of places."

"We're going to keep improving what we are doing, refining our inserts and our techniques. I am really confident that it is something that we can make work for us big time."

NABO has also helped Wendy to refine the company's sales techniques. "Fiona Challis [NABO's Sales Expert] showed us a way of turning selling into buying whereby you really listen

to what your customers tell you and then you respond. I think in the past we've probably done too much talking and not enough listening."

"Fiona has really walked us through the process of building relationships with prospects and understanding their needs before coming up with solutions. She did it in such a way that it was easy to understand, easy to apply within my business and easy to teach to my team." Wendy has a team of more than 20 marketing agents who source family-friendly holiday properties for the company."

"I think what my marketing agents were doing in the past was going out, speaking to house owners and saying, 'This is what we do. Do you like it?' If the answer was 'No', they'd move on to the next person. They hadn't been taking time to listen and understand the needs or pains of the clients. They had just been trying to sell first time."

"When Jonathan said that was the equivalent of proposing marriage on a first date, I realised that people needed to build up a relationship with us, they needed to learn to like us and trust us before they would buy from us or do business with us. That wouldn't necessarily happen in week one."

As a result, Wendy has rewritten the entire training programme for the company's marketing agents.

"It now reflects the strategies that we have learned about selling and the art of selling. That's really important; that is a huge step forward. My team and I now have an enormous sense of confidence on that front."

"Also, as a result of some of the techniques that I've learned, I have been able to develop an online training scheme for my team. One of the challenges that we have is that our team members are all remote workers. They come here for two days to train, and then disappear off to France or Italy or wherever they are based. It is really important that we are able to continue to train them in a way that is easy and manageable. And so using some of the NABO strategies, I

have been able to put in place an online training scheme that is systematised and automated. I didn't have the know-how to do that before."

"I have just created a series of tasks that will be sent automatically to my marketing agents and they can then go away and do some research on their local markets and send us back a small report. They'll then sign up on to the forum and then when they get to a certain point, we will organise a teleseminar. They can do it in their own time and it means that we are still keeping in touch with them."

Using all these strategies will help the company to achieve its short-term target – of doubling turnover in the next 12 months to £1 million and of expanding into more markets around the world.

"I am more confident than ever that our 12-month target is achievable. Actually, it's a slightly low target."

"I have this huge sense of confidence that I've got the support in place to take some brave steps... steps that I would have perceived to have been quite risky in the past."

"Profits are up 30% and I thought marketing an accountancy company would never work!"

Jeff Lerner

Marketing and accountants don't mix; at least that's what Chartered Accountant Jeff Lerner believed before attending his first NABO event.

"I thought, 'Accountants don't do marketing,'" recalls Jeff, owner of Jeff Lerner & Associates. "I'd always believed that accountants were just rubbish at it. And the ones who thought they could do it were even worse."

His company had always relied on personal recommendations to get new business.

After the first NABO event, that changed. "It opened my eyes to the possibility of marketing within our accountancy practice, and I learnt the tools I'd need to do it effectively. Before that, marketing was just ignored."

Specifically, he realised the benefit of web marketing, something he had previously dismissed.

"I thought that nobody in the world would ever change accountants based on something they saw on the internet. But bizarrely they do. That was my ignorance, or arrogance, whatever the word is - probably a bit of both."

He returned to his office and immediately set about revamping the company's website.

"We completely changed it and started again. We followed exactly what [NABO's Founder] Jonathan Jay recommended, including putting a video up and offering free downloadable information – leaflets and reports. The website has moved away from being a brochure to actually something that brings work in."

And the result?

"We typically get one or two hits a week. We are using Pay Per Click advertising to drive traffic to our website and we are getting one or two requests for information and we follow those up with meetings."

"I think we are converting something like 25% of the contacts to clients. It's not enormous, but it still is real business, and it is real business off the internet, which I genuinely thought was impossible."

And the offline results have been more successful, he says. "We used to convert six and a half out of every 10 enquiries and now were converting between eight and nine out of every 10."

"I think it has improved because we're more confident. And because we're using the marketing funnel – see, I'm using words that accountants don't use, it's a different language!"

"After my first NABO event, I looked at our presentations and how we talked about things to people. I looked at our sales process, and changed it so that instead of completely relying on me to make conversions, other people in the company could meet potential clients and follow the same system."

"We did some in-housing training to make that possible and they've achieved similar levels of conversion."

But the 30% increase in profits in the past 12 months is also due to the fact that Jeff and his team have boosted the amount their current clients are spending.

"We're up-selling. We have created a pricing matrix. Actually that was from something that Jonathan talked about - the 'Sales Matrix.'"

The Sales Matrix is a table with your products as the column headings and the names of your customers in the rows. To prepare your basic Sales Matrix all you do is mark off who is buying what product.

By showing clearly on a table who buys what, you also get the opportunity to see what they don't buy. Since you have a relationship with the buyer and you have proven yourself, you can see the opportunities to promote and sell additional products.

"You can see at a glance where the opportunities are for more business. The marketing matrix is excellent."

The up-selling takes place during regular face-to-face meetings with clients, says Jeff. "We just make sure now that we bring up these sorts of discussions."

It's proved to be very successful.

"It's all about confidence: you see three clients and they all convert so when you see a fourth, there is no way that he or she is not going to convert, because you go in and you feel confident it's going to happen."

"What is nice working with Jonathan is that he makes me feel more confident, and makes me feel even happier in what we do."

Marketing has proven so successful that Jeff is about to hire two new members of staff to cope with the new business, something that at the beginning of the recession seemed highly unlikely.

"Sometimes you just pinch yourself, and say, 'Bloody hell, is this actually happening?' It is really nice; we're very lucky."

And he has big plans for the future.

"I want to double our turnover over the next five years - that's an 18% growth per year. Now you can definitely see I am an accountant, can't you? With my numbers."

Part of that expansion will involve developing part of the business that handles tax and accounting for people within the entertainment industry – film producers, musicians, actors, etc. "At the moment, it's worth about £150,000 a year and I want that to grow to about £500,000.

"I have a 90-day plan to get that sorted out and depending on how it goes after that, I think we could achieve our target within three years."

Highly targeted sales message gets training company three new global accounts

Laith Hofayz

Like many business owners, Laith Hofayz was confident the service his company offered was world-class but found the process of attracting new business a challenge.

"We target very large corporate organisations with minimum sales of £1 billion a year, many over £50 billion," explains Laith. Since he set up his training company, ImpactSkills Training Ltd., three years ago to help managers, directors and executives achieve peak performance in communication skills, he has attracted such clients as the major international accounting and consulting firm Deloitte; two of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, Sanofi-Aventis and Johnson & Johnson; global strategy consultancy firm, Roland Berger Strategy Consultants; global interactive marketing services company, Acxiom; Ford; VeriSign; leading hotel groups Marriot International and Sheraton; as well as the NHS; Barclays Bank; the Royal Bank of Scotland and luxury brand Burberry.

Getting those kinds of clients is no easy thing. "They are very difficult to acquire in the first place," says Laith. "It requires a huge amount of rapport and relationship building. Instilling a sense of trust is crucial. It's about getting them to believe in you as a person, because I strongly believe that people buy people first. Once they have got past that, or they know, like and trust you then they actually want to work with you."

He knew from experience that once prospects had tried the company's 'Showcase' event, a free three-hour 'taster' for executive presentation skills, they would be keen to explore the relationship further.

"Once they know, like and trust me I invite them along to a Showcase [the taster event]. It's a very elegant business

model: I don't sell to them, I invite them along. If they can attend, great. If they can't, there's no hard sell. When they come along, we absolutely deliver world class presentation skills. They take away an awful lot of materials: a DVD of themselves, a tip card, and a workbook. And it is very interactive, it's an awful lot of fun, and to date we have never had a bad testimonial. Of course, that is absolute credit and testament to my trainers."

"Once they have come along to a Showcase, we have then captured their imagination and they have warmed up to us considerably. We have given an awful lot away not only in valuable content, but physically given away goodies which really help that they can keep and revisit at any point in the future. They walk away with at least two or three skills that they can implement immediately."

"And the kind of feedback I get is brilliant, such as: 'I've been on many presentation programmes, never been on one where I can actually walk away with tools or skills, or strategies that I can work immediately' and 'Your trainers are very tough, they don't let us get away with anything.'"

"I can grow accounts very quickly once we are in there. Once we've got them to come along to one of our Showcase events, I can grow them exponentially and I know that is where my talent and expertise lies."

"What I wasn't so good at was finding new business." And that's when he turned to NABO for help."

"I wanted to get between six and 12 blue-chip companies as clients," he says. "When I say 'half a dozen', I mean having a good relationship with half a dozen over a year. So from not knowing them to them actually booking repeat business from us in the space of 12 months, which might sound like a ridiculously small target but is actually a pretty tough target."

Fiona Challis, NABO's Sales Expert, quickly identified how Laith could attract more prospects – revamp the company's sales message, particularly its literature.

"What Fiona is exceptionally good at is selling. The 'softly, softly' approach that I had been using worked but only to a certain level. She took our message to the next level very quickly just by changing some phraseology and key words."

"She helped with the copywriting, our choice of words and headlines on emails and with offline brochures, paperwork, letters, flyers and so on."

"I needed to revive the interest in our emails in the very early days of the company. I was getting very high response rates but that dropped off. I needed to resurrect that interest and increase our open rates."

"I started to spend a lot more time on the headlines, and the subject fields of emails."

The effort paid off and the open and click-through rates of the company's emails to prospects doubled from 8.1% to 17%, which meant more qualified prospects were going along to the company's Showcase events.

"Doubling the open and click through rate meant twice as many prospects were clicking on the right buttons to go to a landing page, or a squeeze page and signing up. It immediately doubled the amount of qualified leads who came along to a Showcase."

Fiona also identified how Laith could convert more Showcase attendees into actual buyers.

"She asked me, 'What are you doing at the end of the Showcases?' My approach had always been very consultative, and very tentative. I had always been a bit reluctant to sell hard at Showcases."

"I asked, 'What can we do?' She said, 'Offer them what you do next.' And it was as simple as that, and that's exactly what we did. I began to tell attendees, 'What we do next is a three-day seminar, 'The Complete Executive' where you'll learn the other six presentation skills."

"And thanks to Fiona's copy, word choice and brilliant headlines, we have secured three multi-national global organisations, which will grow into seriously big accounts. And I'm working on another two at the moment."

"Those leads came when I actively pursued a strategy to actively up-sell at the end of the showcase. That has made the difference."

"I'm absolutely delighted because the company's growing, and we are flat out basically all the time now. We are outsourcing and doing all sorts of stuff to mitigate our time. So it's all good stuff."

Print company gets 700 new clients and grows 40% in less than a year

Stefan Boyle

In less than 12 months, Print Republic, an online UK-based print company, has attracted 700 new clients, including the world's biggest online auction site, EBay, and its turnover has jumped by 40%, all thanks to NABO techniques.

"Many of our new clients are small businesses but we've also attracted some really large multi-national companies too," says owner Stefan Boyle. Those include a multi-national software company with a billion pound turnover and a pharmaceutical giant.

"One of our clients has spent £200,000 with us in the last two months."

The major benefit of having so many new clients is that the company is no longer reliant on a mere handful of customers.

"Before NABO, we had 100 clients; now, we've got 800. The majority of our business used to come from a handful of those clients. That's a slightly risky situation because you're reliant on a few clients and if they stop spending or take their business elsewhere, you're in trouble."

"What we're doing is trying to win a lot more clients and increase the client base even further. It's exciting."

Two years ago, Boyle took over his family's printing business. For 40 years, the company had operated as a traditional printing company but with economic conditions becoming ever tougher, Boyle realised it was time to change.

"Margins had eroded over the past few years. The printing business was just getting very hard. It was becoming a pricing game. And I didn't want to play it."

"Part one of my plan was to create an online business – Print Republic - and the second part of the plan was to go more upmarket with a graphic design business, Cheese&Pickle. My vision was to offer customers a complete package – marketing, website design, graphic design and printing."

He knew that to achieve the success he envisioned for both companies, he needed expert marketing help.

"Any marketing we had ever done, be it newspaper, magazine, advertising to direct mail or email, had always bombed. If I sent out a 10,000 mailing, I was always massively disappointed. I got to the stage where I didn't do it anymore; I just didn't advertise because I never got a return on investment. I didn't really know what I was doing wrong."

That changed once he signed up for NABO's Business Development Programme: he discovered not only what he was doing wrong but more importantly, how to make his marketing successful.

"I realised we were making the mistakes that other companies in my industry and almost every industry were making: we were talking about ourselves. Every piece of marketing I had done before had really talked about how good we were, and how customers or prospects should use our services, but we didn't quantify it. We didn't talk about it from a customer's or prospect's perspective. NABO made me change my approach."

Once he made that fundamental shift, he was encouraged to expand his businesses. "Soon after I signed up with NABO, Jonathan Jay [NABO's Chairman] encouraged me to look at what was working in my industry. I looked at VistaPrint, which has a huge annual turnover of £346 million and is therefore doing something very right."

"But I saw that it is also doing a lot of things wrong. Millions of people use VistaPrint to create their business cards but many of them are unhappy with the result. They are attracted by the free business cards VistaPrint offers and the speed

and ease with which it delivers them, but then they're really disappointed with the lack of quality they receive."

"I began to think, 'Let's do what VistaPrint does but do it better. Let's offer business people free, high quality cards. Instead of a stop-gap, our cards will be something they really want to use.'"

"And business cards represent a company well. Because of all the pieces of print you tend to give out, your business card is probably the thing that people keep. Leaflets and flyers are temporary: you send them out all the time, and they're often discarded. But if people are interested in what you do, they tend to keep business cards, especially if the cards are nice."

"So that is the area that we chose to focus on, and we put a campaign together to promote it. We offered prospects 100 free business cards in return for their contact details. The idea was to build a client base, and at the same time prove how good our cards actually were."

"NABO taught me how to start with an offer that is tempting and draws people in. Once you do that, you've got a relationship, and then you can build that relationship and offer more products and services to them."

He decided to offer a simple up-sell programme that consisted of related products – stationery, flyers, letterheads, postcards, brochures, posters, leaflets, and folders.

"I looked at the market and VistaPrint is the only company that has free offers, but it is relentless in its up-sell. It has far too many up-sells, in my opinion. It's not just business cards; it offers 'Love Film' memberships and toll free phone numbers, that kind of thing.

"We're following VistaPrint's model but we've made our offer simple and transparent. We're still giving people the opportunity to do a bit more, to upgrade their purchases, but we're not thrusting 100 unrelated products at them."

Within two weeks of launching the programme, 400 people responded and Print Republic gained 70 new clients.

"We tried to keep the email offer very simple: it was about four paragraphs long, and it explained that it is possible to get a good quality business card fast. We mailed it out to a list with a link to a squeeze page where we captured everyone's details. A lot of those people then went through to the website to order the cards."

"It worked so well – we had a 10% response – I even had three new clients sign up on a Bank Holiday, which is almost unheard of."

"Like anything new, you are not sure how it is going to work but that first campaign was the most successful marketing campaign I'd ever done. It just gives you that inner confidence that what you are doing is the right thing. That applies to the actual campaign as well as the decision to sign up to do the NABO Business Development Programme."

He's also created five joint ventures with clients, including a leading online business price comparison site. "I'm promoting them and they're promoting me."

The idea for creating joint venture partnerships also came from NABO, he says. "We were encouraged to look at the behaviour of our prospects and determine where they go, what they read, what websites they visit."

"Our main target group is start-up companies and small businesses, so we looked at everywhere those kinds of business owners might go - websites, start-up website magazines, organisations like the Chambers of Commerce where people go for information. I have been speaking to all of those people and putting campaigns together."

Since joining NABO's Business Development Programme, he's completely changed his business model, has halved his workforce, and begun to outsource the company's financial management.

"I halved the number of people in the company from 10 down to five. I have a part-time Finance Director who really helps me with running the business and with the financial planning. I've also outsourced the accounts. The business has changed a hundred percent from what it was a year ago," he says.

"I'm using all the techniques that I've learned at NABO's Business Development Programme – sending emails, forming joint ventures with other companies and writing press releases and blog postings."

"The upshot of all of this is that I've really been thinking about the processes. I'm remodelling my business again – looking at my systems, how we do the follow-up. We're generating leads very well but we really want to automate the follow-up with telemarketing and e-marketing."

And his success during the past 12 months has given him huge confidence that he will be able to take more and more market share away from the giant printing companies.

"I am looking to double turnover each year. Now I am on the path of NABO, I can actually see that being feasible, whereas before it was kind of a dream. I had some idea but no real plan, and that is what NABO has given me really."

"When you see some really positive things like your client base exploding in a matter of days, it is hugely exciting. I love it."

Vet consultancy sells out group coaching programme worth £60,000 thanks to NABO

Alan Robinson

Using what he learnt from his first Business Development event, Alan Robinson, the owner of VetFocus UK, has sold out a group coaching programme worth £60,000 to 12 veterinary practices and is about to offer a second to keep up with demand.

He's also introduced a continuity product that he sells to veterinary practices and estimates it will bring in a further £80,000 during the next 12 months. "We set up a veterinary preventative healthcare programme for practices and have already sold quite a few of those." VetFocus is one of the largest veterinary business development consultancy services in the UK.

When Alan attended his first NABO event, a free weekend seminar, he knew he wanted to expand his business but was unsure how to accomplish it.

"I needed the mechanics of how it should work, a marketing approach and web marketing. In particular how to build a database and communicate with the people on it."

"Fortunately, I had a lot of the pieces already in place because I had a database of different clients that I worked with but I needed to put in some structure."

"I'd been doing traditional marketing for a long time. I set up my business in 1995 but I knew very little about the new web-based marketing, using squeeze pages, autoresponders and so on."

"I just wanted to get into that world because that's obviously the way marketing is going. I wanted to know so I could explain it to my clients as well. I share what I learn about marketing and adapt it to suit the veterinary market."

"My brother came over from Australia. He had just sold his company and was looking to move into consulting. I knew Jonathan Jay [NABO's Founder] from The Coaching Academy and I'd received information about his NABO marketing weekends. My brother and I sat down and said, 'Let's go and see this Jonathan Jay guy and see what he has to say.' So we both went along and it inspired us to get on and do it."

"My brother is actually doing something similar now in Australia."

What Alan learned during those two days so inspired him, he signed up to join NABO's Business Development Programme.

"Within the veterinary industry, I was doing a lot of one-to-one consultancy with practices all over the place. I was travelling an awful lot, running and up down the country from Inverness down to Jersey, the west coast of Ireland and down to Holland."

"I wanted to shift that to a more centralised approach and to offer a group coaching programme instead, like Jonathan had set up with his Business Development Programme."

"I wanted to replicate his model and see how it worked."

"We look after 200 veterinary practices across the country and we segment those into four – platinum, gold, bronze and silver. I wanted to set up a Platinum Group and to move everyone from the gold, bronze and silver levels up to that level through a group coaching programme."

"I decided to set up a series of free two-day seminars about marketing and finance for vets and to use it to recruit people for a 12-month group coaching programme."

"I set up a website and promoted it in a similar style to how Jonathan promotes his. I use a single web page with a sign-up option."

"I backed it up with an email programme which sent emails to my database to draw them to my website."

"I also do direct mails to follow up my emails and help drive them to my website."

And the response?

"I filled the first free seminar quite quickly – I limited the number of places and I had about 27 on the first one."

"I decided to do two more. Out of that, half had signed up after receiving an email message about it and the other half came from the direct mail I'd sent out."

"I also put an insert into the weekly "Veterinary Times" magazine and that worked quite well too."

"I now have a waiting list for any more that I want to run."

From the free seminars, Alan has filled his first group coaching programme.

"That's 12 veterinary practices coming together once a month for 12 months. They're paying just under £5,000. And that's going to bring in £60,000 next year."

"We are over-subscribed for the group coaching programme now so we'll have to run a second one."

One email generates £25,000 for leadership training consultant – a 400% return on her NABO investment

Lynda Holt

When Development Consultant Lynda Holt sent out an email telling prospects about a programme her company, Dolan & Holt Consultancy, was about to re-launch, she was a little nervous about the response. After all, it was 10 times the price of the original programme.

The email was offering a £2,500 comprehensive training programme to people who wanted to become 360 Degree Feedback* practitioners for the public and private health sector.

The revised programme, under the company's 'Health Service 360' brand, offered an intensive weekend training seminar, on-going support and face-to-face follow-up meetings. An enhanced programme offered participants the intensive training and follow-up, as well as a personalised website to sell the 360 Degree Feedback products under their own branding.

In the past, Health Service 360, a leadership consultancy for the health sector, had offered a much shorter training course for £250, on the par with market rates.

She was therefore understandably surprised and delighted when three people immediately signed up for the revised programme.

More sign-ups have followed and so far that one email has generated £25,000 of new business. It also represents a 400% return on Lynda's original investment in the NABO Business Development Programme.

"We have attracted a really high calibre of people - highly motivated coaches and learning development professionals."

And Lynda credits NABO with the idea of revising the original programme and for the copywriting techniques that made that email so powerful.

"I had been thinking about the training we run for coaches and practitioners for some time, and what we should do next. At that time, we were offering a short day's training for £250 for feedback practitioners to come and learn about our systems and reports. We weren't offering anything more substantial by way of on-going personal and business growth. That is the bit that I am really passionate about – helping people to reach their potential."

"I wanted to build that part of our business up a little bit more so I talked about it in the Business Development group meeting."

"During that conversation, we moved away from the £250 short course to the idea of offering a more robust development programme and charging £2,500."

"I think [NABO Founder] Jonathan Jay's words were 'If you want to make a million pounds, charging 400 people £2,500 each will do it.'"

The suggestion about raising her prices and adding more value to her training programme had a profound impact on Lynda's thinking.

"It was like a huge penny dropped. I thought, 'Actually, this is exactly what I like doing. Why aren't I doing it?' I went away and put together a development package which is a weekend of introductory training, and then on-going support and face-to-face development and networking meetings."

"The most valuable thing that I've got out of this whole programme, far more than any of the tools and the techniques, is the mind-set shift. That mind-set shift, I think, is absolutely critical to how you see your business, what you are prepared to risk and how you value it. Being able to think about it and talk it through with the Business Development group gave me the confidence to think, 'Well, I'll go for it.'"

"That shift will be the thing that makes the difference between ticking along with everyone else and really standing out."

Once she'd put together the comprehensive programme, Lynda used the copywriting techniques she'd learnt from NABO, to write an email inviting clients to sign up.

"I wrote an email letter, absolutely following all of the style things that I had learned on NABO, and sent it out to my existing group of 200 either very new practitioners, or people who were very interested in being a practitioner, but hadn't really done anything about it."

"We're running our first programme next weekend."

Offering an on-going development programme will have additional benefits, says Lynda. "We will have an on-going link with the people who are on our programme. They'll continue to buy and use our 360 Degree Feedback products, which helps promote our brand. But more importantly, we are developing a network of people so that when we do get the bigger clients, we will have people that we can confidently recommend to manage the projects under our brand, which is a good reciprocal arrangement for us and our practitioners."

"But even better not only am I doing something I love, I'm making a much bigger profit with a lot less effort, and I genuinely put this success down to the mind-set shift that I have got from being involved with the Business Development group."

The success of that initial email has inspired Lynda to redesign and rewrite the company's entire marketing material. That meant scrapping the company's glossy brochure.

"We have recently changed our marketing material to follow the style that Jonathan talks about."

When Lynda first attended a NABO event, she doubted such a style would suit her market.

"Some of the things that were being talked about during that first weekend felt like they were almost counter-intuitive to the corporate market, particularly the public sector where much of our business is. There was a lot of focus on how you put sales emails and marketing emails together, with lots of information, testimonials and free offers."

"Our main UK client is the NHS and I just didn't think emails or sales letters like that would appeal to an organisation like the NHS. I could see where it would work for somebody selling something to the general public and trying to raise their product awareness but I wasn't convinced about how I could use stuff like that to target executive directors in the NHS and whether they would take that sort of style seriously enough."

"If you had asked me when I went for that first weekend whether I would rewrite our marketing material the way I have, I would have said 'Absolutely not; it is completely inappropriate for my market. And I look at it now and I am fairly certain that it has raised the level of interest in our company.'"

"I am very confident it will generate more sales."

Once the first intensive training weekend is completed, Lynda plans to offer the programme to more practitioners and coaches industry wide, as well as continuing to revamp the company's website and internet marketing strategy and write a handbook for 360 Degree Feedback Practitioners.

"I have a long list of things that I still have to do. I have a vision of key practitioners who will be able to do the practitioner training and the things that I am doing now. And I have a real strategy for it developing into something much bigger. So it has invigorated my passion for our business too."

"The Business Development Programme has really opened my eyes to the limitless possibilities."

*360 Degree Feedback is feedback provided by subordinates, peers and supervisors and sometimes external sources such as customers, suppliers or other interested stakeholders.

"I've made such a success of my businesses, I've got people lining up to learn marketing from me."

Anne Perez

Two years ago, Anne Perez arrived at her first NABO marketing event filled with apprehension and scepticism, convinced she was about to fall into the clutches of smooth-talking scam artists. She's since enjoyed such success with the NABO marketing techniques, she now has companies lining up to learn from her.

"The night before my first NABO marketing conference, I remember thinking, 'My goodness, what am I doing?' Then I met [NABO Founder] Jonathan Jay and I thought, 'He's a regular person.' I honestly thought he would be some slick marketing guy who would baffle me... and that I was going to fall into a trap."

She'd signed up for NABO's free weekend marketing seminar because she knew she had to get an edge over her competitors but even then, wasn't convinced that marketing would be the way to do it.

What doubts she may still have had were quickly allayed once the seminar began. "It was phenomenal what I learnt that weekend... it completely changed my mind-set. I discovered that the only way to dominate is to out-market everybody else and that instead of thinking of marketing as a cost, you should think of it as an investment. It was such an important lesson for me."

At the end of the two-day event, inspired by what she had already learnt and wanting to know more, Anne took the plunge and signed up for NABO's Business Development Programme.

"I remember the last hour of that weekend, pacing all around the hotel grounds thinking about the programme Jonathan

was offering. I was thinking 'I'm a mum with three kids and a part-time business and I'm considering spending that much money. Oh, my gosh.' And then I thought, 'You know, go for it.' And it was the best decision I'd made in a long time."

At the time, Anne was one of 170,000 sales leaders for Avon cosmetics in the UK and had a team of 200 representatives based across the South of England. An Avon sales leader recruits, manages and motivates a team of representatives. She also ran a special occasion makeup service, Beauty By Anne.

Immediately after the first marketing seminar, Anne began to use what she had learnt. "I revamped everything to make sure that my marketing was the key focus of my expenditure." Within a month, she'd trebled her Avon direct sales.

The speed of her progress astounded her Avon mentors. "They were just amazed at the success I had. They said, 'My goodness, we've done it in three years and you've done it in one.' And they kept asking me, 'What have you done now? What have you learnt now?'"

Over the following few months, she developed a website to attract new Avon sales representatives.

She used what she learnt from NABO about copywriting, web marketing and automating the administrative side of her business to save time.

"Jonathan suggested I use a voicemail to free up my time, and it proved to be very beneficial. Instead of answering the phone to everybody, my calls went through a message system."

"NABO definitely helped me save time. I was no longer bombarded with phone calls about basic information. Callers got the information automatically and that freed up my time to concentrate on other parts of the business."

"I also learnt about putting a free phone number in adverts and then using a voicemail message so people who

responded called the free number and left their details after hearing my message. I could call them back in my time rather than having them calling me and interrupting what I was doing. That was a big time-saver. And people didn't mind hearing a voicemail message. I think the important thing was they got through and heard a voice and got the information. The company that Jonathan recommended sent a text to let me know when there were messages, and I'd call them back pretty promptly."

"It saved me time – and time is money – and the ideas that Jonathan gave me meant I spent more time on more productive activities which I wouldn't have known about before. I could spend time in front of people rather than on all the back-up, administrative stuff that needed doing. It allowed me to work on my business not in my business."

She began using automated email messages (autoresponders) to help with the recruiting and training of new sales representatives.

"I also used opt-in boxes on my websites – that was new for me – and after the NABO session on copywriting, I rewrote my website."

She began to use her marketing skills to develop her other business, Beauty By Anne, the specialist makeup service.

"A big thing I learnt from Jonathan was about pricing. It was in my head that you had to beat everyone else on price, and so I used to really under-price myself. I hadn't known that people don't buy on price until Jonathan said 'Look at your prices – you have more value than that.' I took his advice and increased my prices. I added more value and made it more of a package, and I got a lot more calls from it. That increased my business."

"I may have been putting people off by being too cheap. If you charge more they have a better reaction to you. It was weird noticing that. I was performing the same service but people treated me as a professional."

Two years on, and Anne is still a highly successful Avon sales leader and the owner of a specialist makeup service. However, things have become even more exciting...

"I'm still running my Avon team – I have a big team, and I don't want to let them down. It only takes a few hours a week because I've got all my advertising automated so that it goes straight through. If people find me through my website, they go onto an autoresponder and then they contact me if they're serious about it. A lot of my training is online: I just put them into the autoresponder and they get all the training through that. So I know that they're getting the material that they need and I don't have to keep repeating myself."

"I've also got text keywords set up so they can text the number and get a message back from me, which tells them the next thing to do. It takes me out of the picture, and I only end up with the people who seriously want to do it."

"I still run the specialist makeup service, but now I have a team of makeup artists to do it for me. I realised there were a lot of people out there who loved to do makeup but didn't know how to make money out of it. So I've been training them, setting up profile pages for them on my website to help them get the work that they want to do and are passionate about."

"Once I've finalised the marketing training package for makeup artists, I'll sell it online."

Anne and her husband, Joe, have now set up a marketing consultancy company, advising other small business owners.

"I fell in love with marketing when I was at NABO last year and so admired what it could do. I realised if you can do marketing then your business is going to soar. I decided I didn't want to be the person doing the makeup. I discovered that what I really love is helping other people with their businesses."

"I want them to see that even if you don't have a lot of money at the beginning, you can be successful. If you've got the idea and the passion, you can follow it through and you can do it."

"I'm setting up a membership site which is going to be a training site for people who want to do it themselves, and I've also set up a mastermind group for people who need mentoring. We're basically focusing on people who really want to shine in their local areas and helping them to gain prominent positions in the local search engine rankings. We're introducing mobile marketing, so they can use SMS messaging and text messages like I use with my Avon business."

"I've always had it in the back of mind that I want to help other people set up businesses and follow their passion – but I had no idea how to do it. NABO enabled me to do something that I've always wanted to do but didn't know how. Now, I jump out of bed at five o'clock every morning and run to my computer to carry on! I'm really doing what I love to do. It's like at last, the real me is coming through: I love to help other people follow their dreams and their passions and set up successful businesses."

"I was sceptical about NABO but it's helped me achieve 50% of my turnover target in four months."

Ford Henderson

Client Attraction Expert Ford Henderson admits that when he booked a place on a weekend NABO seminar, he had doubts about the value of the event.

"To be honest, I was a bit sceptical about the whole thing. I had never heard much about Jonathan Jay [NABO's Founder] before."

"I actually went with a completely closed mind, determined that there was no way in a month of Sundays that I was going to sign up for anything. That wasn't because I thought I knew it all but because it felt really uncomfortable for me to go to something like the NABO event and to be tempted to part with, or to invest in something which was unknown."

"I thought there had to be a catch somewhere, and I was kind of waiting for the catch. There was definitely something in my mind there that suggested that this was going to be a little bit of a waste of time."

That scepticism evaporated within the first 30 minutes of the seminar starting, he says.

"From the first half hour I thought, 'This is just going to be so good.' Jonathan came across as extremely knowledgeable."

"He was absolutely an expert; he spoke from the heart; and he had loads of experience. And the key thing for me was that he explained things in a way that I could understand straightaway."

"I thought it was extremely relevant. And that was the key thing for me. It was relevant, it wasn't pushy and the content was first class."

He was so inspired by what he learnt during the rest of the weekend that he signed up for NABO's Business Development Programme.

"I have been in sales and marketing all my life; I have worked in large corporations, and I've run my own successful business for 20 years but I really needed to fine-tune my coaching skills. I was about to launch a new marketing business in January 2010 and knew that I would need a different set of skills. And I knew I couldn't do it on my own. I realised that Jonathan's knowledge would help me to grow my confidence and my business more quickly at less cost. I thought at that point that I would be a fool not to do it."

And the effect on his new business has been dramatic.

"I launched my new business Ford Henderson Marketing four months ago. I didn't expect to pick up any work at all for the first six months but I already have five clients. My target market is professional service business owners, and my clients are all running pretty small independent companies."

And in four months, he's been able to achieve 50% of his projected 12-month turnover.

He's also created a website, written an e-book "7 Marketing Strategies To Attract More Clients FAST" which he uses as a lead generation tool, set up an autoresponder sequence, built up a thriving list of subscribers and launched an ezine for his subscribers.

Not bad, considering he had once been a little dubious about the need for internet marketing.

"I didn't realise what an absolutely superb concept it is. I am a huge advocate of these things now. I just see the common sense of it all. In a competitive world where everyone is inundated with sales and marketing messages every day, you need to use opt-ins, customer-centric websites and landing pages to grab their attention."

At present, he's busy writing a client attraction guide for service professionals and designing his first public seminars, 'How To Attract All The Clients You Will Ever Need'.

Being part of the Business Development Programme has been hugely beneficial, he says. "I have learned a lot of new and different marketing techniques that I had not really been exposed to for many years.

"I've realised the need to give people a clear message as to the benefits of working with me. The number one lesson that I've learnt is that it is all about your clients' results, and the advantages that you bring to them."

There have been other intangible benefits. "It really has given me an extra boost and an extra confidence. From my own skills point of view, it has certainly toned those up and given me lots of things to think about in terms of trying to help my clients out."

"And I have met a great bunch of people. I look forward to going down to Buckinghamshire every month because I know I am going to learn so much and work with people of a similar mind-set: they are ambitious people, they want to grow their businesses, they have an open mind to learn and it just rubs off. There is a great buzz in the group."

In fact, the prospect of turning up to the group meetings every month has spurred him on to achieve even more than he thought possible. "When I turn up to the meetings, I don't want to be the person that hasn't done anything in the past four weeks. I don't want to be the guy that has got nothing to contribute. I want to be one of the people who've achieved something really big during the month."

"I am a one-man band, an independent person. I need that accountability. I value their input. We do have the opportunity for people to critique in a 'tough love' kind of a way. It's an uncomfortable position to be in, but I think most people do see it as being pretty robust and constructive criticism. They take it on the chin and they probably get their feathers a little

ruffled. But they dust themselves down and you can see that they are better for the experience."

And so long as he maintains the momentum, Ford expects to more than recoup his investment in the Business Development Programme.

"I am probably going to recoup it two or three times over."

Company follows NABO's advice and bucks the trend by raising prices with brilliant results

Roz Watkins

At a time when price slashing is seen by many as the only way to keep afloat, the advice of NABO's Founder Jonathan Jay to increase your prices may seem counter-intuitive, even crazy, but as company owner Roz Watkins has found, it is a sure-fire way to not only survive the recession but to accelerate your results.

Roz is the creator and founder of a unique weight-loss method 'The Enlighten Programme', a non-diet psychologically-based approach to shedding weight. When she attended a NABO event, she had been selling her home-study weight-loss programme for £97. "The home study programme was really just starting when I went along."

She admits that Jonathan's advice to 'add more value and raise your prices was something she didn't feel comfortable with at first, even though Jonathan pointed out that a weight loss programme that actually works without dieting, has got to be worth a lot!

"I was worried about it really. I couldn't just put the price up and sell the same thing. I changed the appearance of the product, I replaced the original programme folder with something that looked a lot smarter and I added extra things like a wall chart and food diaries. I made it look really up-market. It also comes with unlimited email support now, so it is a good deal for clients. It's very important to me to know that clients are getting good value."

"I also added a money-back guarantee which helps people make the decision to go for it. And everyone loves it so I haven't had to give anyone their money back!"

"I don't think I would have had the guts to put the price up so quickly without Jonathan's advice. But I thought, 'I am just going to do what he says and give it a go.'"

The result?

"People are buying it straight off the website (www.enlightenprogramme.co.uk) without even speaking to me. Which is great." The value-added product now sells for £245.

"People are just clicking the button and paying for it. Before it was £97 but it wasn't as nice – it didn't have the same folder and additional support material."

And has anyone queried the increased price?

"I had one email the other day from a person who said, 'It looks really good but I haven't got any money. Can I just buy the CD?' And I went back to her and said, 'Yes, you can but I wouldn't recommend it and I spelt out why and what she could do and then I gave her some options – 'I have some of the original programmes that I'm offering at £75 or you can buy the manual and CD for £50 or just the CD for £20... She came back to me and said 'I've decided to go for the full programme.'"

"I've learnt from Jonathan that if a few people aren't complaining about your price then maybe you are offering it too cheaply!"

The weight-loss programme is based on scientific and psychological principles (Roz did a Master's degree in natural sciences at Cambridge University and is also a Master NLP Practitioner and a Master Hypnotherapist).

In fact, it was NABO's adherence to measurable marketing results that prompted her to sign up for more advanced courses.

"I had read books on advertising and I'd always been very interested in tested advertising methods. I guess it appealed to me because of my science background, testing one thing against another."

"I had seen Jonathan's previous company and I was interested in how he used marketing so I thought I'll go along to the NABO event and see what it was all about. By the end of the weekend it was obvious that Jonathan used a direct marketing approach and I guess that's what attracted me to it really."

She then signed up to become part of the Business Development Programme.

"Most of the marketing that I am doing now is due to NABO," says Roz. "When I signed up for the Business Development Programme, I went out for lunch with Jonathan and we talked through my business and worked through a strategy and I've just been following that."

"I'm using teleseminars and I wouldn't have got there for quite a while."

"I'm offering a free report in the adverts and I don't think I would have thought of that."

"I'm using InfusionSoft (an email marketing programme) and that's making a huge difference. I just don't know how I'd be able to manage it without it and that was something I got from NABO - Jonathan recommended we use it. I was already with a newsletter provider but in no way could it do what InfusionSoft can do."

She's also just launched a high-end version of her weight loss programme. Called the 'Enlighten Elite Programme,' it costs £1,250 and includes on-going coaching support for six months. "Again that was something that Jonathan recommended. I knew I needed some sort of up-sell and that's it."

"If I had done it my old way, the more normal way, I would have probably been doing a lot more networking, meeting people. I would have got clients but it wouldn't have been so scalable, so measurable."

"Take my last advert, for example: I spent £400 and it's brought in £1000 already and I haven't even done a teleseminar. I got 240 enquiries and they're all now going through the process automatically and I've had four new clients just in the past few days, so it's beginning to come together. It has been a lot of work but by the end of it, I'll be able to say, 'Okay I spent £400 on an advert and it's brought in £3,000 or whatever, so therefore I can afford to do loads of adverts and scale it all up.' It's not involving huge amounts of my time (once it's set up) like networking would have done."

"I'm making some changes to my website. I'm going to have a mini-series about how to lose weight without dieting and have a prominent signup box for that on the home page. I'm starting to use Google AdWords to send traffic to a squeeze page which offers the mini-series. That is all a result of what I've learnt from NABO."

"Successful property investors now want to speak at my networking events."

Christina Hine

Since attending her first NABO event, property investor Christina Hine has set up a networking group, created a website, learnt to write copy and press releases, been published, built a mailing list from scratch and been invited to form joint alliances.

The networking group is proving to be so popular she's now being approached by more established investors hoping to be allowed to speak at her events.

What's more some have asked if she will consider forming joint venture partnerships.

The idea for the networking group, the Stansted Property Meet, was inspired by what Christina learnt at a NABO event. NABO delegates are encouraged to set up their own networking groups as a way to accelerate their networking reach, raise their profile, build trust and credibility, and enhance their expert status. Christina set up the Stansted Property Meet for like-minded property investors in her area.

"My main objective in setting up the group was to be able to build a list so I could up-sell relevant services and products at some point. I also wanted to help other professionals. On top of that, there wasn't a group in this area and I got fed up driving to events so far away. I knew hosting a networking group would be a great opportunity and that it would give me a high profile and I would be able to joint venture and have access to top people. It's quite hard to get to talk to some of the leaders in property investment if they don't know who you are."

"Even though it's quite small in property terms, other investors are now saying to me, 'I'll promote your events to

my list if you email your list about my upcoming events.' I didn't want to deceive any of them and so I told them the size of my list and they were still happy to do it. They may have lists of 10,000 people and I've got a list of 50 but they're still happy to do that swap which is great for me. It's given me leverage and credibility. The more my list grows the more opportunities will grow with it."

"I just received a phone call from The High Flyers Network, a virtual Property Networking Club. They said that they had heard about Stansted Property Meet and would like to come and professionally video my next event. After some discussions and negotiations I decided this was a good thing, as I would be given my own page on their website with my photo, bio and web link."

"Also they agreed to provide me with a clip of the video recording for my website. I will become an affiliate for their website earning a commission of 25% for each investor that signs up through me."

"That is 25% of the monthly fee each investor pays for as long as they continue to subscribe to The High Flyers Network."

"The London Property Network is also now promoting my events in its newsletters. All I have to do in exchange is to sometimes give away free tickets to 'first time visitors' to my club."

Christina established the networking group after learning how to create a website landing page at a NABO Business Development Programme workshop and then emailed property professionals a link to the newly-created site.

"One of the great things about the NABO Business Development Programme is that it's practical: you do the marketing work there and then."

In the years before NABO, Christina had struggled to promote her property investment company GoodFindProperties through conventional advertising.

"Previously I had run adverts in the local papers and had done extensive leaflet drops. I'd spent quite a lot of money and hadn't received any viable leads."

"Earlier this year, someone sent me a link to NABO's website and I went on it and I was so impressed with the marketing and the content. It was just so cleverly done and I just thought, 'I really need to learn how to do this.' I was very impressed and I decided to book and to go on the weekend and to learn about marketing. "Not long after attending her first NABO marketing weekend, she signed up to become a member of the Business Development Programme."

"I joined the Business Development Programme because I wanted to get more in-depth knowledge."

"The great thing about the Business Development Programme group is that it's small. You have a whole day to learn about things like PR, copywriting, or aspects of internet marketing like Google AdWords."

"The one-day events are practical, they're not just sitting and learning and you have the opportunity to do the work there and then. [NABO's Founder] Jonathan Jay has specialists come along every month like [PR expert] Paul Green and [small business web marketing expert] Ed Ravis. There are other business owners to interact with too."

"At one of the meetings we learnt how to design a landing page and I was able to get that up and running. I began to email all the property professionals that I knew so that they could be directed to my page and opt in."

"I also joined FaceBook and set up a group for Stansted Property Meet and put a link to my landing page and invited people to join the group."

At another Business Development event, Paul Green taught participants how to attract free publicity for their companies. Christina used what she learnt that day to get editorial

coverage in "Axis" magazine and a local paper. She also has a listing in "Your Property Network Magazine."

"I've had four pieces published. It's fantastic free advertising for the network club but it also helps promote the speakers who talk at each event. They're really pleased. I'm getting all these speakers approach me because even though they don't get paid for speaking at my events they get publicity and a chance to up-sell as well."

Seven months ago, Christina had no public speaking experience and lacked the confidence to try it but as the host of the Stansted Property Meet, she has been forced to stand up and address people each month.

"I was really nervous about talking at the first meeting. I am still very nervous but the feedback that I'm getting is that I'm very natural."

"Jonathan suggested putting your personality into your business and I was a bit dubious about the idea to begin with. I didn't think people would want to hear about me, but I did want to establish credibility and to show that I do have experience buying and selling property. I decided that when I introduced each event, I'd tell a little bit of my story. I've been a property investor since 2003 and now have 15 units in my property portfolio. I say, 'Next month, I'll tell you the next instalment because I don't want to take up the speaker's time.' I spoke to somebody at a networking event the other day and asked him if he was coming along to my next Stansted Property Meet event and he said, 'Yeah, I want to hear the next bit of your story!' So Jonathan's suggestion does work."

She's also begun to ask for testimonials, something else she learnt from Jonathan Jay, and now has a dedicated page on the Stansted Property Meet website for testimonials.

While the practical marketing techniques have been enormously useful, Christina says one of the biggest benefits of attending NABO events has been the boost in her confidence. "From the moment I finished the first course,

I was just so empowered. I realised marketing is not that difficult and that there's no harm in approaching people. It gave me a format to do it really."

"One of the biggest things I've learned from NABO and the Business Development Programme is confidence – to have the confidence to get out there and do things."

"There have been points where I've had to write a sales letter or an email and I've sat there with my head in my hands and thought, 'I can't do this. I don't know what to say.' Then I have remembered what Jonathan said: 'If you can speak, you can write.' That has given me the confidence to do it really. He's been very supportive."

Now that she's mastered writing press releases and sales letters, Christina is now considering launching her own blog, creating a newsletter and writing Special Reports and a book as well as other property-related information products. "I've been very busy setting up the networking club and doing other things but I now want to produce Special Reports on property, as well as a book. I shall probably do some audio too. And I'm going to be offering consultancy and mentoring and putting on courses."

"One of the very helpful things on the NABO marketing weekend was when Jonathan explained the marketing ladder."

The theory behind the marketing ladder is that you need to provide prospects with an opportunity to experience your services or products at different price points. Many service professionals struggle to convert prospects directly into high paying clients. They make the mistake of trying to sell high-end services without first developing a relationship with prospective clients and they only offer a high-priced service without any lower-priced options. The marketing product ladder encourages you to offer something for free to entice as many people as possible to get to know, trust and like you and your product or service and then gradually lure

them into becoming paying customers by offering slightly more expensive products or services as they progress up the ladder.

"I have actually started to put that into practice. Level one for me is the networking events, which I've achieved. Level two is the Special Reports and books. Level three is offering property mentoring or property sourcing."

"I don't think I would have created the Stansted Property Meet without the help of NABO. The ideas I received from the NABO seminar and, more importantly, from the Business Development Programme are too numerous to mention."

"I have only acted on a few of these ideas, but have been blown away with how effective they are. I plan to press on with more of the suggestions and make the most of the new opportunities that are presenting themselves to me."

Business growth specialist celebrates best month ever after doubling prices

Mike Yates

Raising your prices during a recession may seem a risky step but as Business Growth Specialist Mike Yates discovered, it can also prove to be a very profitable one.

Mike, a Business Development member for the past nine months, said after restructuring his business (which included doubling his prices) that he enjoyed the most profitable month ever since he set up his business mentoring, coaching and training company 121 Business Ltd. seven years ago.

"January was my best month in business. I began generating five-figure net monthly profits which has continued. What's more, I've freed up more time to work 'on' my business."

In the past, Mike found delivering one on one business coaching, training and mentoring was limiting his earning potential as he could only fit in so many clients each month.

"I wanted to develop the business, in particular the back-end. Obviously working with one-to-one clients I was limited by the amount of time I had each month. That had limited my business performance. And that meant I'd limited my business financially: I could only deal with 'x' amount of clients and deliver a certain financial figure."

"Part of my restructuring process involved effectively doubling my prices by halving the time I spent with clients. I did that pretty much overnight."

"I actually then started signing up more clients so not only did I get an excellent financial result in January but I also had a lot more time to work on the business."

"I have always been aware that it's not about the amount time that I spent with business owners: it's more about what

we were doing within the time frame and how much they're prepared to do in between calls for their own business. It's also been about helping the clients to understand that they're really investing in their desired change and what that meant to them. It wasn't about spending four hours together if we could achieve the same result in two (which we can in most cases!)."

Seeing how fast some of his fellow Business Development Programme members were achieving results inspired him to focus far more on income-generating activities.

"The whole Business Development Programme is about implementation and month on month I was going to the meetings and I hadn't quite implemented this, and I hadn't quite implemented that. Although I was moving forward in the business, I began to realise that I just wasn't getting the results I was looking for as quickly as I wanted to and that it was down to me to do something about it. In simple terms I thought: 'If someone else can do that and they can do it at high speed, then they must be doing other things that I'm not doing!'"

And therein lies the power of Business Development meetings. "When you go to the monthly Business Development meeting with like-minded people who are driven and who aren't just talking about what they want to achieve but actually getting on with things, you then begin to think 'Well I want the same – and I can do this too.'"

"I very quickly realised I could be doing a lot more than I was."

"At that point I was thinking, 'I don't feel I'm moving at the pace that I want to move.' One of the things that Jonathan Jay [NABO's Founder] has talked about a lot is getting focused on what you want, and also using your time more effectively."

He was also spurred on by something else he heard at a Business Development meeting... "Jonathan said to the group: 'You can either be rich and successful or you can make excuses but you can't do both so which one would you like it to be?' I had heard it before but it just hit it right on the head.

He has a very no-nonsense style that I absolutely love. And his track record to date also means his advice comes from 'hands on' experience – he's run a successful business and knows what he's talking about."

The result was Mike became more strategic with activities like networking. "I started to look at where my time was going and to question how productive the networking I was doing was. I worked out where I was actually getting clients from for the least amount of time input."

"When I do networking now, I'm actually looking for very specific people to connect up with, with a view to presenting to groups. Normally when I do a presentation, I find it is a very, very good way of getting clients."

He also cut back on any activity that didn't generate financial results.

"I was actually the director of another company and really that was sucking a lot of my time but it wasn't getting results. In a nutshell, I'd split my focus up too much."

"Now what I'm really doing is focusing one hundred percent on my own business to deliver results for other businesses."

"I've been setting goals around what I'd like to do over the next year, two years, three years, four years and I've also been setting higher financial goals centred on helping a larger volume of business owners achieve their own business goals."

"One of those goals is to work more with groups of businesses and provide more mentoring within companies. I am now putting a marketing plan in place so that I can really grow my business and leverage my time, rather than just doing one to one consultations."

He's also developing a set of products that he can sell online.

"It is all about consolidating and building a back-end of the business. The next stage for me is product based and group based, which I think will then naturally allow me to then start growing the business."

Fit Biz Builders use NABO tactics to lead revolution in the fitness industry

Scott Hodson

Five months ago, Optimum Fitness Software (OFS) was, in the words of its co-founder Scott Hodson, just “another boring web company”.

Despite winning numerous business awards for its innovative technology, the seven-year-old health, sport and leisure web design and software company was struggling to differentiate itself from every other company offering similar services.

“We were like every other single web design and software company,” admits Scott. “It was just so hard.” So he attended a free two-day NABO event in the hope of picking up some skills to help his business survive the recession. What he got was far more radical.

During the event, he had “the most important conversation” of his professional career with NABO’s Sales Expert Fiona Challis in which she helped him to clarify his company’s value proposition.

“Fiona took just 10 minutes to cut through my waffle and change my business from ‘a web business in the health, sport and leisure industry’ to ‘a collaboration of fitness business experts who turn regular fitness business’ to six figure income enterprises by increasing leads, conversions and sales.” The newly defined business would be called The Fit Biz Builders.

“From that defining moment, the entire focus of the business was different and my whole mind-set changed dramatically and I’ve been able to attract more and more business every month and it’s been easier than ever before.

That weekend, he also made the decision to join NABO’s Business Development Programme. “After my conversation with Fiona, my question had changed from ‘Can my business afford this?’ to ‘Can my business afford not to have this?’”

Scott and fellow fitness industry experts Yvette Nevrkla and Lucy Johnson set up The Fit Biz Builders with the intention of helping fitness professionals and personal trainers to raise their online profile and build profitable businesses. For while most fitness professionals are highly accomplished at enthusing their clients and helping them to lead healthier, happier lives, they tend to be useless at business and marketing.

Most don't have a clue how to price their services or communicate the value of the service they provide to their prospective clients.

Many personal trainers have a business model that consists of providing clients with one-on-one sessions and exchanging time for money. The only ways they can earn more money are to either increase their prices or work more hours (which brings with it the risk of burnout and physical exhaustion).

Like many service providers, they mistakenly believe word-of-mouth marketing will be enough to bring in new customers.

They also think the way to attract more clients is to get yet another fitness-related qualification, rather than improving their marketing skills.

"If they have no business coming in, they think another qualification will get them more customers," says Scott.

They are also "technophobic", unaware of the business building potential of web marketing. "Traditionally gyms and personal trainers have online brochures that are the equivalent of electronic business cards," says Scott, explaining their websites do nothing to persuade would-be clients to sign up for their services.

An online survey of fitness professionals confirmed Scott's beliefs: it revealed that the majority of respondents spent less than £50 a month on marketing.

To launch this revolutionary concept, Scott, Yvette and Lucy took NABO's advice and wrote a free tips booklet called "The

Fit Biz Blueprint: 5 Essential Steps For Fitness Business Success” and then created a landing page to promote it.

Once the landing page was created, Scott had to find low-cost ways to get traffic. He approached training providers in the fitness industry. “I didn’t have the spare cash to spend on a lot of advertising and stuff like that, so I needed to find some affiliates.” The company now has 10 affiliates promoting the free book, including the industry’s governing body, The Fitness Industry Association, the YMCA, the charity TAGworks, and the world’s biggest training provider for fitness professionals, Premier International Training.

“They allowed us to post a link to the free book on their websites and now we’re getting traffic from them. I think we’re up to 600 now new subscribers in four months.”

“Feedback from the book has been amazing. One of the quotes was, ‘This is an awesome book, full of killer information that will have a profound impact on my fitness business.’”

As the mailing list grew, Scott knew he needed some way to convert those prospective customers into paying clients.

“I was thinking, ‘Fantastic, excellent. We’ve got a big email list, now what? How do we actually move forward with this?’ I started to promote a membership site where for a monthly fee, people could get access to me and a few other people. It flopped – only 7% of our audience were committed to paying for that service – so we’ve stopped that.”

Scott and his fellow experts spent Christmas considering alternative ways to convert their prospects into paying customers. They decided to create a free, online 12-week business course for fitness professionals which they began marketing at the start of the year and launched last week.

"The industry is going absolutely nuts about it. It's revolutionary to them because a lot of the industry is very much about how to present fitness, health, well-being and diet and everything like that. It's all about teaching people how to deliver that information."

"So when we came along and said, 'We're going to be teaching fitness professionals how to earn a six-figure business and triple their profits', they lapped it up straight away because they do very well in teaching people how to become gym instructors, personal trainers, well-being coaches and everything like that, but they don't teach people how to run a successful business."

"We've already got 54 people signed up. Over the next 12 weeks, they'll receive privileged content and the idea is to move them towards subscribing to our services."

Those services range from providing a template website and monthly online tutorials to a full e-commerce platform with a member's area, referral schemes, consultancy with one of the company's marketing experts, and help with developing products.

The number of subscribers for the course will grow enormously in coming months, thanks to one of Fit Biz Builder's affiliates, a charitable organisation called TAGworks. It provides people who are either unemployed or not in education the opportunity to get a qualification in the health and fitness arena and then gives them a work placement.

"TAGworks is referring them to our online business course. We're really proud to get that gig because it will give us 600 new candidates every eight weeks."

Another new key affiliate is SportEx, who publish a journal that goes out to 28,000 fitness professionals. They have donated an advert for the "tips guide" in the journal in exchange for some cross advertising opportunities. This will result in a massive increase in the prospect list looking to grow their fitness businesses.

Scott also presented his first seminar in January to 22 fitness professionals. It was called 'How to systematise your fitness business for massive profits' and was fully funded through one of Fit Biz Builder's affiliates – the Fitness Industry Association.

"We've started to put a few things in place to increase the actual number of bums on seats for the next seminar. The feedback we got from it was brilliant: one person said they were gutted that they didn't have this information years ago when they started their fitness business. Overall, people gave us eight out of 10, so we've got a little room for improvement as always. But for a first stab, I'm very happy with that."

"It was a great day, very empowering, and I loved every second of it." What's more, the company made £4,000 in sales from it and gathered 12 hot leads. Scott followed up those leads and it resulted in another £4,000 worth of orders. So from that one free seminar, The Fit Biz Builders earned an impressive £8,000 in sales.

"It's just transformed the way that we sell, which is brilliant. NABO has given us the mechanisms for high growth. When all of those systems are in place it will be highly manageable and profitable. With the new deal with SportEx and two other suppliers, we believe we will turnover £300,000 in the next 12 months. That's modest and it's not that overwhelming but the great news is that about 70% of it will be profit because of what NABO has been able to teach us."

"In Six Months NABO Helped Us Recover the 30% Dip In Turnover the Recession Had Caused."

Tony Willson

Learning the lifetime value of customers from NABO helped Tony Willson and his wife Lindsey recover the 30% dip in their company turnover caused by the recession.

"Our turnover had gone down over the previous 18 months about 30% - I should think we've probably made that up in the last six months since joining NABO," says Tony. For the past 10 years, he and Lindsey have run Helmsman Services, which provides clients with cost-effective outsourced training and development solutions. Its clients come from both the public and private sector.

"Something that was really rammed home on the NABO weekend was the lifetime value of a client," recalls Tony. "It shocked me to realise that our clients' lifetime value was very high, but we were only spending pathetic amounts of marketing to get them."

Soon after that first NABO event, Tony was approached by a company looking for a £5,000 sponsorship for a one-day seminar on outsourcing. "Normally, we wouldn't even bother to speak to them but because we wanted to get into outsourcing with local authorities, we did. I got them down to £2,500, and we sponsored the laptop bags. We would never have done that before NABO... but as a result of that sponsorship, we got our first local authority client."

At the event, Tony happened to be sitting next to someone who worked for a local authority.

"There was one of those sessions where you have to turn to your neighbour and chat. I told the lady next to me what we did and on the way out she said, 'I think we'd better have a chat because I'm just about to lose my training co-ordinator'.

She worked for Tunbridge Wells District Council, and we signed a seven-month contract with them about six weeks later – and have just renewed it, at a higher price, for a year.”

NABO also inspired Tony to use a telesales company to contact local authorities and generate more leads for the company.

Before the calls were made however, Tony mailed each council official on the list a personalised, printed ‘To Do List’. “I had learnt from NABO that you need to give something away to start a relationship. At the bottom of each list, I added ‘Ring Helmsman to outsource your training and development.’ When they received the telesales call, most of them remembered the giveaway. It was very successful.

“Most local authorities take ages to make decisions. Now we are talking to two in Kent who have said they want to take up with us in April and we are talking to a couple of others and have appointments to see a few more.”

He also hired a Business Development Manager to take care of the company’s marketing and bring in more business.

“I should have done it 10 years ago. If not for the catalyst of the NABO, I would never have done it. NABO’s impact has been vast. It’s given us a totally new outlook particularly on marketing. It’s given us a positive outlook on the whole thing and it’s changed our thinking from ‘Let’s see if we can weather this recession’ to ‘Let’s grow the company’.

“For two years, we’d been saying, ‘Gosh, I hope we’ve got a business at the end of this financial year.’ And that’s exactly what we got. NABO helped changed our perspective so that we started to think, ‘We want something bigger’ and that’s exactly what it’s now attracting.”

“The recession had exactly the impact we thought it would have while we were thinking that it would be negative. Directly we started to think that we could actually take advantage of it, particularly because people are trying to cut

back and our services would cost them less, things began to change. My mind-set was that the recession was going to affect us adversely but it's now affecting us very positively. Our services, particularly the outsourced services, are all about saving our clients' money on their training – not just the cost of training but the people and time involved. We can go to people and say, 'We will save you money. We will charge you a fee, but we will save you a hell of a lot more than that.'"

He's also benefited from finding out what other business owners are doing successfully. "One of the other benefits of NABO is that it opens your eyes to what other people are doing and how it could be used by us. I haven't adopted everything – I haven't written a book yet – but it has caused me to take on a PR lady. She's writing articles for us every month for either the care sector or local authorities."

The company's websites have also been changed several times – rewritten to be customer rather than company-focused. "We changed the copy and put news and sign-up boxes for newsletters."

Although the latest version of the website went live only a month ago, it has already generated interest from a large care organisation. "I've got an appointment with them next week and that came from the website. It's very good when they come to us and ask, 'Can you possibly come and see us?'"

"They have their own training department, but they're looking at it and thinking whether or not they really need it. It's all about saving money and in most cases, we know we can do the job that they would employ somebody to do for probably 50% of the costs."

Helmsman has also been approached by an affiliate company and the deal could boost its turnover by 25%. "They are a health and safety advice company and they don't do any training but they want to. They are quite big – they have a million-plus turnover. Rather than set-up their own training department because they haven't got the expertise, they've

come to us. The MD says on their turnover, they should be turning over about £200,000 a year in training revenue. We will do the training so we'll get the major part of that and they'll get the rest. It will certainly enhance the service they give to their clients."

With all the new business coming in, Tony has hired one new person and if either of the two new care companies come on board, he says he will need to hire another person in the next few months.

Marketing helps training company to thrive during recession

Alison Miles-Jenkins

Until the recession forced many of her clients to slash their training budgets, Alison Miles-Jenkins thought using marketing to get clients for her management training company, Training To Achieve UK, was unnecessary.

After all, for nearly 20 years, she'd attracted enough large corporate clients via word-of-mouth that she hadn't needed to spend money on any kind of promotion. Since she set it up in 1990, Training To Achieve has become one of the UK's leading training companies, well known for its professional management development services and training for insurance and re-insurance professionals, local authority employees, housing association managers, NHS managers and medical staff, private sector businesses, regulators and SMEs. It also provides professional management training, consultancy and coaching to other professionals too.

"For 19 of the 20 years we've been in business, we got on very well without any kind of conscious marketing or sales activity whatsoever," she says. "We didn't have any kind of marketing strategy at all and expanded through word of mouth and repeat business, and we always had more than enough work. I was bringing up three children, and I thought 'This is giving me a good income. Everything is going well. I don't actually want to expand it.'"

In fact, Alison thought any kind of self-promotion was a bit like 'showing off'. "I always thought it was boastful to promote yourself," she admits. "For the last 19 years, I was in a position where, if people knew about me, they would use me, and they loved what I did and they recommended me and my company to other people."

So when the UK economy went into recession, she wasn't too concerned.

"When people started talking about the recession, we thought we were quite recession-proof. In fact, 2009 was one of our best years ever in terms of our gross revenue."

But the following year, the company's major clients reacted to the economic downturn by imposing bans on all in-house training. Suddenly, the company's major source of business looked like it might dry up and after so many years of relying on recommendations, Alison was forced to find new ways of attracting clients.

"In 2010, a lot of our clients were really hit financially. We could see our income rapidly going downwards for reasons that we couldn't influence in any way.

"At the beginning of the summer, we started to look into marketing and that opened our eyes to all of the things that we had not been doing but should be doing to give our best support to our business other than repeat business and referrals."

After hearing about NABO from a client, she attended one of its marketing events in early autumn and then joined the Business Development Programme.

Alison soon realised the merits of actively marketing the business, rather than relying on the much slower word of mouth advertising. She also began to appreciate the value of promoting her expertise to her market.

"I think the most important thing for me is that I have actually become more self-promotional – showing off about what you've achieved and that sort of thing is not something that I've ever done. However, I have learnt to have much more of a PR hat on to promote myself as the leading expert that I know that I am – and that's given me confidence."

A graduate of Warwick University, Alison has a degree in Business Studies and German, has numerous post graduate

management qualifications, is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and has taught Chartered Management Institute courses at the highest level.

She is also a Corporate & Executive and Personal Performance Coach and often works with those most senior in organisations on a one to one basis.

"I made the decision to promote my personal brand as a way of getting my company known, rather than the other way around because at the moment in our field, there are literally millions of competitors. So if you try and differentiate a training and management consultancy on the basis of the company, I think that's really hard. So something that NABO led me into thinking was to promote my own personal brand more and so that's what we're doing. For the wider audience out there, we really did not have a presence at all, and I've definitely got a much higher profile now."

The impact on her business has been dramatic: after using what she learnt from attending just two NABO events, the company enjoyed its busiest January ever.

"We've got five or six quite big formal proposals out there in the market now with a variety of different clients and sectors. We've never had that just after Christmas and that is definitely down to the techniques I've learnt from NABO."

"I think if I hadn't acted on the ideas I got from my first NABO seminar, we'd be having a very tough time now. So many training companies are going to the wall and I think it's quite a major achievement that a company of our size that never really publicised what it did at all, is still here."

Another of the NABO-inspired changes Alison made was to repackage some of the company's products to suit clients with limited budgets.

"We looked at the different products that we would normally supply to our clients and then thought of innovative ways to supply the service to them at prices to suit their current

budget – in other words, we looked at their needs and used quite inventive ways of delivering our products for much less cost. For example, we reduced the number of contact hours we offered for training. That brought in a lot of revenue over the autumn period and saved us from having a disappointing year.”

The company also offered free coaching sessions to entice prospective customers. “We got quite a lot of income as a result of doing that.”

Following the advice of NABO’s PR Expert Paul Green, Alison sent out a press release to promote the company. After it was published in a local newspaper, she was invited to enter the 2010 Colchester and District Business Awards. The company won the coveted ‘Education and Lifelong Learning’ Award, and Alison reached the finals for the ‘Business Woman of the Year’ Award.

“We received lots of high-profile coverage in the area too.”

Alison has also changed all the company’s online and offline written material. “We’ve moved from an academic stance to a much more marketing-led approach in terms of how we’re putting our information over to our clients. That’s permeated through offline as well as online.”

“We’ve changed our website from an information portal into a sales tool. It’s meant lots of work, and I think we’re just starting to see the benefits of that now really. We looked at what was on the site in terms of our services and products pages and re-wrote it. For the first time in 20 years, we’ve put together a really polished portfolio of almost 60 pages that contains our rationale, our core values, why we’re different, as well as all our courses, products and services and our testimonials.”

“We’re on to version three of our site now. We also invested quite a lot of money in some professional videos. We’ve got six video clips on our site, which are also on YouTube and with yBC (your Business Channel). And we’re up there with some of their leading industry experts.”

"At the same time, we're also raising our profile in social media – I'd been writing a blog for some time before joining NABO, but we're now on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Ecademy. In fact, I've now become one of the first Ecademy accredited digital coaches."

NABO has also influenced Alison's intentions for the company. "I'm looking at it from a very different perspective now. My ambitions for the company have grown – I want this to be a company that I can sell or manage from a beach somewhere in 10 years' time."

"I'm determined to make Training To Achieve a leading edge training company within the UK and beyond. Our target this year is to have five times the income that we had last year. And that will be a 200% increase on our most profitable year in 20 years. Obviously, that's a projection but that's what I'm aiming for. If we miss that target, and we just go back to what we had in our most successful year, that would still be brilliant given the economic conditions."

NABO helped generate 350 leads from the public sector

Rob Worth

Writing a book has helped consultant Rob Worth generate 350 leads in what can be a difficult and achingly slow-moving market to enter – the public sector.

Rob's consultancy Worth Solutions provides public service organisations with what is known as 'lean' solutions - ways to improve their services and cut their costs. Lean means creating more value for customers (or patients) while minimising waste and using fewer resources.

Rob has gained a foothold in this sector in the past 12 months with the help he's received from NABO.

He revamped his website and wrote articles but the NABO strategy that has had the biggest impact on his business is writing a book.

"NABO experts talked about writing a book and how it improves your credibility in your marketplace by demonstrating your knowledge. They also told us how to do it. I took action and wrote the book 'Beat The Cuts – How To Improve Public Services And Easily Cut Costs.'"

"It's the most important thing I've done in terms of marketing my company," says Rob. "It is the rock that the rest of my marketing rests upon. It has been a revelation. Last year, I gave one hour Master Classes at two conferences, and they generated 205 requests for the book. Of those 205 requests, 35 people ticked the box on the sign-up form to say they would like me to go and talk to them about how I could help their local authority or NHS Trust to improve their service and cut their costs."

"Now, 35 out of 205 may not seem many, but I'm not sure I even had 35 meetings during the previous five years I'd run the business. One morning I had an email from a woman who had

requested the book but was worried because she hadn't ticked the box to request a meeting with me. 'Is it still possible to have the meeting with you?' she asked. That's amazing – people are worried about missing out on meeting with me."

"In the same month, my Google AdWords campaign – which I also learnt how to do from NABO – generated another 80 requests for the book. I spent £160 on that campaign which means each lead cost me about £2. That's so amazing to me and it all came about from writing the book."

Two years ago, Rob had been worried that work was "just dribbling in". Back then, he relied on networking and referrals to bring him new business.

"I had many times when I was glad that the VAT quarter was drawing to a close because I knew I had made a loss and could therefore claim the VAT back. At times, I felt as if I was hitting my head on a glass wall, through which I could see all the opportunities that I was missing. I just didn't know how to reach my market."

Driven by his desire to help public services, he decided he needed help to reach the decision-makers in his market.

"Jonathan Jay [NABO's Founder] had been sending me emails for a few years and some I'd read, some I hadn't. However, one caught my attention and I signed up for a two-day marketing event."

He quickly made the decision to join NABO's Business Development Programme, believing it would give him the tools he needed to reach his market.

"The glass wall that I was banging on for so long has now shattered. I know that if I want another 350 leads, another 30 meetings, I can book a conference and I can do more Google AdWords campaigns and I'll achieve it. People are coming to me now. My marketing is bringing people to me because they see that I have the expertise to help them. My next step now is to grow the business and bring in more consultants."

Contact Details

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More Testimonials

One NABO strategy made me sixty thousand pounds with one hours work!

I must admit I was somewhat sceptical that it would work, but I sent out 100 letters in the way Jonathan described (took me about an hour). I have now signed up five new clients, totalling £60,000 of work... which I would never have had if I hadn't become a NABO client! I would highly recommend their courses to any business owner who wants to make more profit, in less time, with less effort!

Name withheld on request.

The funnelling process and the marketing on the internet session should add another 20% to my net profit.

A fantastic weekend where I learned many things with respect to marketing my business and understanding different customer groups. I learned the importance of focusing on quality customers - those that contribute to the bottom line. The funnelling process and the marketing on the internet session should add another 20% to my net profit. The event and interaction with the other delegates will also be a major benefit to my business."

Bhovinder Nagra, Business Owner For Four Years.

This will definitely help brings tons of ROI to my bottom line.

"Coming from a project management background in the financial sector, I knew I needed to update my marketing skills. After attending the marketing session, I immediately recognised some of the techniques that have taken me eight years to learn. This will definitely help brings tons of ROI to my bottom line.

Toks Aboderin, Business Owner.

I estimate an annual profit of £300,000 as well as a highly motivated team.

I have a head full of great ideas and have started implementing them already. I came here not knowing what to expect - I now have a head full of dynamic suggestions that will see the light of day on Monday. I estimate an annual profit of £300,000 as well as a highly motivated team."

Tony Donnelly, Business Owner for 35 Years.

I have come away with new tools and strategies ... that I know will generate an additional £80,000 - £100,000 in revenue over the next 6 months.

As a business growth strategist I thought I had access to and created powerful strategies for my clients. After going on the NABO seminar I have come away with new tools and strategies that I have been able to use immediately to improve and develop my offering that I know will generate an additional £80,000 - £100,000 in revenue over the next 6 months.

Nathan Tarrant.

I now have reassurance that I can put one or two things into practice to lift my business up to a level that gives real rewards.

I came because I was not sure how to take my business forward from making a reasonable to good living to earning an extra £40,000 per year. I now have reassurance that I can put one or two things into practice to lift my business up to a level that gives real rewards.

George Brownlie, Manufacturer's Agent.

The marketing skills I have learnt and the small key points I have picked up will boost our sales...

My business is doing well. I came to NABO to try & learn new skills. The marketing skills I have learnt and the small key points I have picked up will boost our sales once we implement the changes. Thanks to NABO and training team.

Paul Garrigan, Business Owner For Two Years.

After joining the mastermind group, we have increased 40% of our business.

"After joining the mastermind group, we have increased 40% of our business. It has added extra look altogether. I will recommend everyone to join the mastermind group. It will add value to your business. My wife thinks I should go to Jonathan's seminar every week. She thinks Jonathan has changed my way of thinking.

Ijaz Sarwar.

The stuff that I have learnt once implemented will save my business a lot of money.

Before I came I was quite sceptical, but having read Sanjay Shahs testimonial from a previous visit he had made, I then knew that it would be a kosher weekend. The stuff that I have learnt once implemented will save my business a lot of money.

Richard Finney, Business Owner for 12 years. Information worth thousands of pounds

I have learned 18 new gems of ideas that I can put into my business straight away.

As a marketing specialist myself I was worried this would just tell me what I already know. How wrong I was! I have learned 18 new gems of ideas that I can put into my business straight away. The seminar has inspired me to take action immediately and will be worth thousands to me over the next few months. I will be recommending Jonathan Jay to my network connections.

Andrew Wilks, Business Owner for eight years.

Just one idea will add several hundred thousand pounds to my bottom line.

Before coming to The NABO seminar I was buried and frankly confused, stuck not knowing what my next steps should be to drive my business to the next level. I have been blown away by the number of valuable distinctions I have gained, that I can apply immediately. In fact, I found myself returning to my room early to implement several key learnings from the first day. Frankly speaking, this seminar will pay back many, many times over. Just one idea alone will add several 100k to my bottom line!

Craig Boddington, Business Owner for 15 years

Overnight Success

**The 21 Key Marketing Strategies You
Can Use Immediately To Save Yourself
Time, Get More Customers, Make More
Sales And Turbo-Boost Your Profits**

PLUS: How 21 Small Business Owners turned their
fortune around in the worst economic climate and
without investing a penny extra

Jonathan Jay

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First published in 2011.

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ISBN 978-0-9566192-2-8

Printed in the United Kingdom by CPI Mackays Ltd, Chatham, ME5 8TD

A CIP Catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Introduction

Are you fed-up with your business? Tired with working long, long hours and never getting the rewards you deserve? Is your personal life suffering because of the demands your business makes on you?

It doesn't have to stay like this. You can do something today to start turning things around. In this book, you'll discover 21 key marketing strategies that you can start using immediately to cut down the hours you work, generate more leads, convert more customers, make bigger profits, and start living the life you've always wanted.

For the past couple of years, we've taught thousands of business owners from the UK key business systems that will turbo-charge their business, boost their profits with less hassle and stress, possibly less staff and certainly a lot more fun. These business systems cover everything from creating an automated 'sales' machine to targeting the market that will make the most profit for any business.

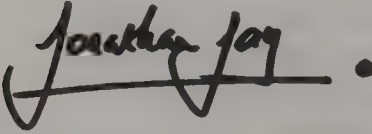
We've taken the key marketing strategies from each of those systems and put them in this book so you can start using them today. All of the strategies are practical, easy to use and they work – just read any of the 21 success stories at the front of this book to discover how business owners have used them to double, even triple turnover.

But don't try all 21 strategies at once... start with a few and measure the results you achieve. When you're happy that they're boosting your profits, introduce a few more.

Of course, you're very welcome to come along to one of our NABO Introductory Days and learn the complete Business Building Systems...

I look forward to seeing you at a NABO event very soon!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Jay". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "J" and a dot at the end.

Jonathan Jay

Chairman and Founder

NABO - The Nationwide Alliance of Business Owners

Key Marketing Strategy #1

Identify your target market

No matter what you sell - even if it's a product or service that everybody can use - you will be much more successful if you learn to identify your target market (the people who really want and will buy your product or service).

This is also known as 'niche marketing' and it is a multi-part process that includes locating unique markets with untapped profit potential, learning everything about them, and making irresistible offers to them.

The trick to niche marketing is that the message is specific and highly targeted. It's extremely personal as in "I'm talking to YOU" personal and your content 'speaks' to the unique needs of your target. That's what makes it compelling.

You don't have to confine yourself to one niche. If you have the infrastructure to support multiple niches you can sell into as many niches as you can support. But you must give each niche the feeling that this is all you do and you do it especially for them.

Your niche

When looking at markets to go after, you must make sure that there are ways to find out who the prospects are in that niche and whether the niche is profitable.

The problem with getting off-track (and allowing your marketing to become fuzzy or too general) is that it becomes more and more difficult for prospects and customers to distinguish your product or service offering from any other.

Prospects want to believe that somebody can truly fill their needs.

If they believe you understand them, you serve their needs or if you've served somebody just like them, they will be more

likely to try your business than the one that does not meet their specific needs.

To succeed in a big way, you need to find an underserved niche and provide information that is desperately wanted and needed.

The danger with being a generalist is that while it might give you a bigger market to aim your product or service at, it also brings with it greater competition. Rather than being a generalist, become a specialist in one sector of the market and then when you've built up a client base there, consider adding another sector.

When you identify a niche you can become known in that niche and clients begin to call you.

Contrary to popular opinion, narrowing your focus will actually result in more not less clients. A good niche will give you between three and 10 times more clients than general or unfocused marketing. A good niche will provide you with a long-term, sustainable advantage in your marketing that will position you apart from all the competition and attract an endless stream of prospects.

The key to finding a great niche is identifying where your passions and strengths allow you to package your service or product as a tangible solution to your target market's biggest unmet needs.

Being a specialist has another advantage you are perceived as an expert in a particular field. Your specialism immediately confers a perceived degree of expertise.

By focusing on providing solutions to customers' problems, you'll be able to make a strong, targeted promise.

The result? People will seek you out.

The fact is that once you have defined your market you are much more able to focus on satisfying the needs of a specific group of people.

Without a niche you will be wearing too many hats as you try to satisfy all of the people all of the time. The danger is that you will burn out, become disillusioned and lose your focus. What you want to do is satisfy some of the people all of the time rather than all of the people some of the time.

It's also important that you identify and analyse your competition.

This is one of the most critical and yet most overlooked steps in marketing a business effectively. Many business owners don't have any idea who their real competition is, how long they've been in business, what they have to offer the marketplace, or the advantages or disadvantages of doing business with them.

Too many business owners think they know their competition but don't research them often enough. This means they miss opportunities to fill gaps in the market left by their competitors. What's more, when prospective or existing clients want to know what their company does better than the competition, they are at a disadvantage because they don't know.

It's imperative that you constantly update the information you have about your top competitors. Gather as much objective and useful information as you can about your competition.

You need to know how long your competitors have been in business, how many staff they have, their hours of operation, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what their unique selling propositions are.

You need to determine what your competitors offer the marketplace that you can't or don't. Do they have buying incentives, membership clubs, or preferred customer discounts?

Make sure you can answer the following questions:

- What's their product or service? (Are they in direct competition with you? Does their product or service address a problem in the same way your product or service does?)
- What is their revenue?
- How have they grown or shrunk over the past 12 months, and over the past five years?
- What is their market share? (This is often more relevant than their revenue. Some industries are tracked by analysts, which makes the information easier to find.)
- What do their customers think about them? How do they treat their customers? What do they do to keep their customers' loyalty?
- Is your customer service better than the competition? Do you give more value added service? Do you offer volume discount pricing? Do you have a longer-term relationship with your customers?
- Does your company make it easier in any way for a customer to do business in any of the following areas: additional education, free consultations, bonuses, incentives, better sales terms, longer hours, better customer service and after-sales service, guarantee or return policy, or a rewards club?

Contact your competition to determine how good (or bad) they are at establishing relationships with prospects.

- Do they try to get you to come to their office, shop or set up an appointment for a salesperson to meet you?
- Do they ask when the product or service you're using will expire or need renewing?
- Do they question you about your immediate and long-term needs and wants?

- Do they only provide quotes for the product or service you enquire about?
- Do they give you reasons for doing business with them rather than other companies?
- Do they attempt to capture your name, address, phone number and email address so they can follow-up with more information or send you samples?
- What's their history? (Have they expanded their range of products or services? Have they moved out or into markets? Find out why they withdrew from or moved into a market and how that affected their profits.)
- What's their position in the market? (This reflects their core value - our product is the most reliable, for example.)
- What segments are they targeting?
- What distribution channels do they use? (Look at their distributors, sales reps, etc.)
- What is their marketing budget?

Look at your competition to find out what they are not delivering. Is it something that you could offer? What is something that you can do right now that will fill the gap or offer something that no one else in your industry or area offers? What market category or niche is not being served by your industry?

Once you've completed your competitive surveys begin comparing the data you've collected on your competition with your own operation and use it to identify potential profit-generating opportunities for your company.

Key Marketing Strategy #2

Generate more referrals

Don't wait for referrals – ask for them. Referrals are the single fastest and easiest way for any business owner to build deep relationships, earn more money, and enjoy the freedom they desire. But the problem is getting those referrals. How do you ensure your business attracts a stream of never-ending referrals?

Put energy into building a referral programme. Prospects who are referred are easier to close, make their buying decision faster, are more profitable because there's no cost in acquiring them and they spend/invest more, and they're more loyal – they tend to stay with you longer.

Don't take a haphazard or passive approach to referrals. You can create a more consistent flow of referrals using the following methods:

1. Make sure your colleagues, clients and customers know all your products and services.

People talk most about your work when they really understand it. But, unfortunately, most clients have usually only experienced the benefit of only a few of your products or skills. Referrals come faster when clients recognise how you can improve their lives. They must be able to understand all your services. They must be able to explain to others what you do. Focus on educating them about all areas of your product or service, ideally by giving them the direct experience of benefiting from all your expertise.

2. Dedicate time at the end of each prospect or client meeting to discuss referrals.

Many business owners aren't comfortable with the idea of asking for referrals. Overcome this by realising most

clients are thrilled that you thought so highly of them that you're requesting their help.

3. Continue to build a relationship with clients, customers, and colleagues by anticipating their needs.

If you want to create top-of-the-mind awareness in your customers' minds, provide value, and do it fast.

4. Reward referral-generating behaviour.

As with any behaviour you want to reinforce, pay attention to and reward referral-generating behaviour.

Referrals don't happen just by accident. They are the product of a great customer experience a mix of sales, marketing and customer-support efforts. It's too easy to forget to remind customers how great their experience was so that they will be more willing to make further referrals. Out of sight is definitely out of mind, in this case.

Identify the 'ideal' referral candidates, articulate your company's USP and how it relates to their network, create the ideal environment for referrals and thank the referrers.

Referrals are the best low-cost marketing projects you can deliver. The best way to make referrals work for you is to stay in contact with your network.

Key Marketing Strategy #3

Follow-up clients to create back-end sales

Finding first-time customers takes time, money and energy (think of the advertising, direct mail, telemarketing, email marketing, and overhead costs).

Each customer you attract and sell can cost as much or more than the profit you make from each sale.

Therefore, it makes sense to make additional sales to each customer you have already bought and paid for with your marketing efforts.

Once you have a customer, do everything you can to encourage them to continue to buy from you.

Maintain frequent contact with your customers.

Unless customers know what you have to offer and the benefits to them, they simply won't buy.

Keep them informed by thanking them for existing business and telling them what you have to offer by letter, newsletter, ezine, phone, email or personally.

A new service or product is an excellent excuse to contact them. A special thank you discount or exclusive offer to loyal customers is a great way to keep them buying from you.

Give unexpected extras to your existing clients.

In the clamour to find new clients, many businesses forget their existing clients. This is a huge and costly mistake if clients don't feel they are appreciated, they'll move on.

Ignore your existing customers and you miss not only the opportunity to show them how much you really do care about the relationship (and naturally, their purchase and their on-going business with you) but also to ask for referrals and testimonials.

No one likes to feel they are being taken for granted. Customers today won't accept it. There are companies all around the world vying for their business so there is no need to accept second-rate treatment.

Ensure your business has the technology and staff to cope with providing the technical support, the requests for information, the after-sales care and customer service that all customers have come to expect.

Excel at customer service and make a point of delivering more than clients expect.

When you exceed clients' expectations, they will be delighted and feel obligated to return the gesture. They'll refer you to their friends, family and work colleagues and they'll stay your client longer.

Make sure you have additional products or services to offer those first-time buyers at the time of the initial purchase.

When you offer a better version or extra add-ons or any supplemental services the customer needs, in order to benefit more fully from the item or service they're purchasing, you not only create more cash for yourself you create a happier customer who ultimately enjoys their purchase more.

It's a simple yet highly profitable strategy – and one that is often over-looked by many business owners.

Key Marketing Strategy #4

Sell without salespeople

If you want to increase the sales of your product and service you don't have to employ a sales team do it. There are other ways of doing it which produce the same (or even better) results with less effort, less money, and less stress.

How? It's easy. You let your marketing do all the work. Think of it this way: salespeople can only talk to a certain number of people a day. They have off-days and they have on-days. There are many reasons why salespeople have suppressed sales. However, your marketing can be multiplied and replicated thousands of times without having to hire thousands of people.

For example: If you want to sell your product or service to a potential customer, you (or your salesperson) have a conversation that lasts at least 10 minutes either over the telephone or in person. Your potential customer might be interested and might buy it. They might not but you (or your salesperson) will still spend 10 minutes in conversation, regardless of the outcome.

Or you could use one of many online or offline ways to contact tens of thousands of people who are interested in what you are selling. And you could do it at the same time.

How?

One way is to write a sales letter to potential customers. By using direct mail, you can contact many people with the same sales message. Your potential customers all read it within the same 24-hour period and react.

You offer them a huge incentive to take action, to make the purchase or the booking. What are the kinds of offers and promotions that would stimulate a list of prospects to get in touch with you?

- Time limited – phone today
- Claim something free
- Add in a bonus gift
- A special offer
- A buy one, get one free promotion
- Something that's running out

What you're looking for is a promotion that creates action NOW – rather than later.

In your letter, you've explained what they need to do. "If you want this, this is what you do. Pick up the phone and call this number, and speak to one of our team." One number, one person.

You've told them what sort of person makes an ideal customer. "You are perfect for this product if you fill (this criteria), (this criteria) and (this criteria). But if this is you – this, this, this – no way, it's not for you."

It means you'll only be speaking to qualified prospects – people who've read what you do, know how much it costs, and who fulfil the criteria. They phone you and say, "I'm interested!"

All you need is someone responding to the phone calls at your end. If you don't have anyone, if you're a one-person business – either it's you doing it, or a call centre and they take all the calls, take the messages and email them to you, and then you can respond to them one after the other.

Compare that to your army of telesales people phoning out and speaking to possibly two people that qualify in a day. I am sure you'd rather have one person accepting incoming calls from qualified prospects than an army of salespeople making phone calls to unqualified prospects.

If you're adamant that your product or service can only be sold voice-to-voice then you use this technique: you use the

letter to drive people to a teleconference in which someone highly qualified (you, your best salesperson, one of your presenters, trainers or your Managing Director) talks about the product for 40 minutes in a sufficiently interesting way and then answers questions.

The questions will be from people who have been interested enough to pick up the phone and listen for 40 minutes – not tricky questions! Your spokesperson answers the questions and then offers an incentive that will encourage callers to take immediate action. “Phone in the next hour to buy and you’ll receive...” Which means every time that phone rings it’s a sale!

Another very effective way of reaching many people at once is to send them an email. If you don’t have your own list of email subscribers, you can approach companies that also communicate with your ideal customers. Ask them to send their subscribers an email about your irresistible offer with a link to your landing page or website.

To receive the special offer, they must provide you with their contact details. Once you have it, you can begin to build a relationship with them by sending them automated messages over time (these are known as autoresponders).

It’s all about removing the necessity for employing huge numbers of people and making a process that you can do at any time on any day of the week. The alternative is to have a big sales floor with dozens of people making outgoing phone-calls, massive phone bills, huge wages and very high stress levels.

Once you have that system there, you only have to tweak it occasionally if circumstances change. Keeping an eye on the system is easy compared with keeping an eye on a team of human beings.

Key Marketing Strategy #5

Work less, make more money: save time by delegating and outsourcing

One of the biggest mistakes business owners make is trying to do everything themselves.

Rather than focusing on the 'big picture', the strategies, that will make the business grow, they waste inordinate amounts of time working on administrative tasks that would be better accomplished by others.

The only way you can really grow a business is by building systems and building a team.

It's hard for entrepreneurs in particular to embrace this idea because they're scared to spend the money and lose control.

If you do have staff, then delegating tasks will not only free up your time to focus on marketing but also demonstrate your trust in the people who work for you.

Asking for their help will show them how much you respect them. That's a powerful motivator and will help to build your team.

What sort of jobs can be delegated? To determine if a task can be delegated, consider the following questions:

- Is this a task that I know one of my team members excels at?
- Is this task something that I can easily hand off without much direction?
- Do I need someone else on staff to be capable of this task (succession planning)?
- Is this something that I can delegate without having to micromanage or control the process?
- Is this something that I can train somebody else to do in a reasonable amount of time?

Think of those tasks that take you away from working on building your business and that someone else may be better qualified to do like accounting, website design, deliveries, graphic design, travel arrangements, HR functions, and payroll, as well as activities like photocopying, data entry, data collection, report preparation, and even fact-finding assignments.

Once you've clarified what job, task, project or activity is to be delegated, choose someone who will be capable of completing it.

You may need to train or even supervise the person you've chosen until it's clear that they are capable of completing it on their own but this short-term training will pay long-term dividends.

If you don't have staff and are overwhelmed you can hire a Virtual Assistant (VA). They're home-based professionals who perform a wide range of office functions for one or more clients without setting foot in the client's office.

In fact, these days, you don't need to take on loads of staff: you can 'outsource' most tasks, whether that's sales, administration, web design, copywriting, public relations, etc.

This will free you from the administrative tasks so that you can focus on business growth strategies marketing, working clients, and generating new products or services and income streams.

You should have people for anything and everything you can delegate or outsource.

Key Marketing Strategy # 6

Create compelling copy to grab prospect's attention and convert them into buyers

Use the following tips and techniques to transform your emails and other sales material into attention-grabbing, prospect-converting money-making messages.

Target Only Those Who Can And Will Respond

Forget trying to attract the world to buy your product or service and concentrate on those who can and will respond to your offer. Know your audience and write directly to them. Make your offer as appealing and persuasive for those people as you possibly can.

Write To Sell Not To Impress

Put the thesaurus away. The point of your advertising copy is to increase sales and profits not to make people gasp in astonishment at your cleverness.

Sell One Thing At A Time

Don't try to sell the entire shop in your copy offer just one product, one service or one idea. You can always tell customers about all your other fabulous products and services later.

Tell Your Customer What To Do

This may seem obvious but it is so often forgotten. Too many advertisements do a great job of educating and persuading customers but leave out the most important bit, the part that tells the prospect what to do, so tell your customer to buy now and then lead them through the buying process.

Provide Compelling Reasons

Your copy must provide compelling reasons why your product is better than any others, why prospects should believe what you say is true and why they should act IMMEDIATELY.

Perfect Your Headline

The most crucial part of the advertisement is the headline. It's the hook that captures your customers' attention and motivates him or her to continue reading. It's the first step you take in persuading anyone to buy your product or service.

A headline, according to copywriting expert Robert Bly, not only gets attention, it selects the audience, delivers a complete message and it draws the reader into the body copy.

To determine whether your headline is strong enough, use the '4-Us formula created by copywriting expert Michael Masterton: ask yourself whether your headline is urgent, unique, ultra-specific, and useful. Rate your headline on a score of one to four for each of the four 'U's. If it scores less than a three or four on at least three 'U's (urgent, ultra-specific, useful or unique) you need to rewrite it.

Make It Easy To Understand

Keep your customer in mind when you write your advertising copy. Always make it personal: use the word 'you' throughout to emphasise the point that you are addressing the reader directly.

When you've finished, put the copy aside for a few hours or even a day, if possible, then pick it up and read it aloud. Does it still make sense? Do you stumble over phrases or words? Can you take out some long words and replace them with something shorter or snappier? (For example, instead of 'in order to' use 'to', instead of 'employ', say 'use', instead of

'facilitate' use 'help'.) Have you used any jargon or technical language that your customer will not understand? This of course depends on your target audience: if you know all of them will understand your jargon (and possibly ignore your advertisement if you don't use it, then by all means cram it in!) For example, people in the corporate and life coaching profession prefer the word 'facilitate' and dislike the connotations of the word 'help' so if you were writing copy to appeal to that audience, you'd deliberately use the word 'facilitate' wherever possible.

Don't Bury The Treasure

If you have a great offer, reveal it (or at least make mention of it) at the beginning. Don't be too coy and make your reader wait until the end to discover your great offer because they may not bother reading that far and you've lost an opportunity for a sale.

Write Like A Thriller Writer

Keep your words, your sentences and your paragraphs short. It makes it easier for your reader to understand what you are saying and retains their interest. Think of how the authors of best-selling thrillers construct their chapters; each is about three pages long. The reason: they want readers to stay reading, to keep turning the pages to retain their interest. Whatever you think of those books, they sell hundreds of thousands of copies a year. It obviously works... so don't fight it! Use what works!

Long words and jargon just get in the customer's way. Ask yourself, do you want your reader to reach for a dictionary to understand your fancy language or do you want them to grab the phone to make the order?

Break your copy up. Great chunks of copy look intimidating and even boring. If you're writing a long sales letter, break your main points up with catchy interesting sub-headings.

Make liberal use of bullet points, numerals, dots and dashes anything that makes it more visually appealing.

The Most Powerful Word Is Free

The word 'free' is still the most powerful word that you can use in advertising. Everybody wants to get something for free.

Other powerful words or phrases include: 'how to', 'why', 'sale', 'quick', 'easy', 'bargain', 'last chance', 'guarantee', 'results', 'proven', and 'save'. They are used so frequently because they are so powerful.

Key Marketing Strategy #7

Form Strategic Alliances

A strategic alliance is an easy way to explore new market opportunities, to find new leads, attract new customers and really turbo-boost your sales BUT careful planning is imperative because they do involve time, resources and energy.

Why form a strategic alliance? They allow your business to gain a competitive edge through access to a partner's resources – whether they are markets, technologies, capital or people. With a strategic alliance, you increase your resources and capabilities which in turn boosts your company's growth and expansion. You may gain access to more established channels of distribution, marketing or branding.

So, how can you form a successful strategic alliance?

- 1) Think creatively about possible relationships and try not to limit who you consider partnering with. Find the right partner and you might suddenly open up an entirely new customer base for your product or service. For example, consider forming a strategic alliance with your competitors to share your unconverted leads. People mistakenly assume that every other company in their industry is a competitor. But they're not. You can share similar customer bases but just because someone's bought from you rather than from someone else doesn't mean they hate the other person and love you. It means that:
 - The timing was right
 - The price was right.
- 2) Define your outcome. Decide what you want from the relationship: access to a market, new customers, or ways to retain your existing customers?

- 3) Decide who you want to partner with. What type of company will be most beneficial for your purpose?
The ideal partner in a strategic alliance is one that has resources, skills and assets that complement your own. The strategic alliance has to work contractually, but there should also be a good fit between the cultures of the two organisations. One of the biggest reasons for failure in strategic alliances is an incompatibility between company cultures.
- 4) There are many places to find strategic alliance partners: your existing customers or suppliers, your competitors, your industry's professional or trade associations, trade shows, joint venture brokers, business networks, networking events, etc.
- 5) Before you make any commitment, take time to check out the reliability of your potential partner.
- 6) Define the basics of how the strategic alliance will operate. How will the partnership work? Will you or the other company help each other to become more efficient, will the other company bundle your product with their offering? Or will they sell your product on a commission?
- 7) Ensure that the relationship works financially for both you and your partner. Unless you both gain from the partnership, one of you will lack motivation and feel resentful and the relationship will crumble.
- 8) Don't tie the deal up with so many clauses that neither of you has room to move. Do have an exit strategy in place should either of you decide to dissolve the strategic alliance.

Strategic alliance partnerships may take time and energy to set up and run but they can also make a huge difference to your company's bottom line.

Key Marketing Strategy #8

Boost your online sales (and fix your website)

To sell your product or service on your website, several crucial factors must be in place...You need:

A Professional Looking Website

First impressions are crucial: consumers make up their minds about a website in less than three seconds – they judge it on appearance. So the design – the presentation, the typeface, the layout, the imagery - must convey professionalism, and trustworthiness.

However, the graphics should not distract visitors from the overall purpose of the site - to sell your product or service. Keep it simple and eliminate anything that distracts from this purpose, whether that's elaborate graphics, banner ads or links to other companies' websites. Graphics will slow down the loading of your website so only keep those that are highly relevant to your product or service.

A Website That's Easy To Use

Keep your home page (the one that potential customers arrive at) as simple as possible. Ensure your language is understandable: use simple words and short paragraphs. Make sure you convey your core message: this product or service will solve your problem and here's how.

Make it easy for visitors to navigate through your website. Have plenty of text links or icons on every subsequent page so they can move easily between pages.

Don't be seduced into using the 'latest' graphics... unless they are proven to generate sales. You're selling a product not vying for a 'cool Internet site' award.

A simple “sales process”

Most importantly, make it incredibly easy for people to buy your product.

This is where the most common mistakes are made in web design today. Make sure the benefits of your product or service are very clear to the visitor and make sure it is easy to order them.

- Have you built credibility with the visitor before you asked them for their order?
- Have you created excitement and desire before you asked for the order?
- Have you given the visitor several clear ways to order the product or service both on and off line?
- Have you guided the visitor through all of this step by step?

When your prospective customer or returning customer sits and waits for your page to load properly, time goes by excruciatingly slowly.

If your site is taking just a little too long to load, it is very tempting for them to click a button and keep on surfing. You have only one shot at keeping the customer at your site, so make sure you don't lose them because your webpage doesn't load fast enough.

Enticing Content

To create a steady stream of traffic to your website, you must give your visitors a reason to visit and continue to visit in the future.

You must provide your visitors with fresh content on a continual basis.

No. 1 – Free

“Free” is an extremely important word in the world of offline marketing, and it’s just as important online.

In fact, in some ways, “Free” is even more important online. Much of the Web has grown up on the promise of Free:

- Free browsers
- Free music
- Free software trials
- Free subscriptions

Don’t be shy about using the word. Offer free downloads, free subscriptions, free reports and papers, free trials, free shipping, free consultations.

No. 2 – Sign Up

Every site should invite its visitors to sign up or subscribe to an email programme or newsletter.

Why? Because you need to reach your prospects by email. People check their email more frequently than they surf the Web. Much more frequently. Conversion rates of first-time visitors to immediate purchasers is low. Instead of hoping that your visitors will make a purchase on their first visit, concentrate instead on collecting their email addresses.

Good content in their inbox will bring visitors back to your site again and again. Poor content will damage your chances of ever hearing from them again.

No. 3 – Buy

You need to ask for the sale. It’s amazing how many sites invest in presenting products and services, but fail to close the sale. Make sure that you actually ask for the sale at the right moment.

Make the BUY link prominent, both by positioning it close to the product or service in question, and by boosting it with a strong graphic treatment.

The word BUY is an instruction. It tells people to do something. So make that instruction jump out and grab their attention.

No. 4 – Now

Now is good. If someone digs deep enough into your site to find the product or service they want, and then just makes a mental note to come back again sometime, you've lost her.

If you can't get people to act immediately, forget it. So ask people to do things NOW:

- Sign up NOW
- Buy NOW
- Tell a friend NOW

Go further still with some incentives:

- Sign up NOW and receive a FREE report on [whatever]
- Buy NOW and get FREE shipping

Somewhere on your website, you also need to have the following information:

About Your Company

This is where you tell your potential customers something about your company and yourself. It will help you establish trust and indicate that you are not a fly-by-night business who will take their money and disappear. Make your company story interesting.

Contact details

You must provide some form of contact information or support clearly listed on your website; visitors will expect an email address and/or phone number, possibly even a physical address. Most small companies today limit their support to providing an email address. If one of your main marketing points is to differentiate yourself from the competition with extraordinary customer service, you need a phone number.

Frequently Asked Questions

Compile all the questions your prospects are likely to ask onto a page on your site and answer them – and make sure that you supply the answers to them in a variety of formats – text, audio, video, etc. It's important that you provide as much help and information as possible. This will greatly help decrease your support costs and time spent on maintaining the website.

Press Room

Make it easy for others to promote you and tell your story. Compile all your press releases (or write them) for each of your products on this page, and link to any articles about your company, articles you've written for other companies' newsletters or scholarly journals, or any white papers it might be helpful for a journalist writing about you to have.

Key Marketing Strategy #9

Generate free publicity to get more leads

Public Relations (PR) means you and your business getting coverage (being written about in the media or being featured on the radio or TV). Why consider PR? It is a very effective way of attracting new customers and reminding old customers of your existence and rekindling their interest in your products or services. And it costs you virtually nothing.

Does PR work? Absolutely.

Credibility makes publicity a very valuable tool. People know that advertising is paid for and that companies can buy space to say whatever they wish about their products and services. And for this reason, people are more sceptical today than ever before.

One way to get around this scepticism is via publicity – people know it can't be bought; it appears to be endorsed by the medium that makes your announcement. And since people tend to trust the media they watch, listen to, or read regularly, they accept your message as being completely credible.

That's why publicity can win you many more sales than any form of paid advertising or promotion. Taking advantage of this credibility can result in a windfall for your company.

What's more, you don't need to pay for PR because you can do it yourself. No-one else will have such a vested interest in promoting your company as you do. How? It's easy. Pick up the telephone and talk to your local media representatives: journalists working on newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations in your area.

The media makes a living by providing valuable news and information to its audience. Newspaper editors and TV's

managing editors are bombarded every day with news releases from all over the world that they have to read, review, and consider for their audience. The key to getting coverage is providing a compelling answer to the all-important question, "Why would anyone in our audience be interested in you NOW?"

Media outlets are always looking for stories that are newsworthy. That's their job. To be newsworthy your topic has to be controversial, strange or out of the ordinary, a human interest story, or tied to current events.

In general, information outlets are looking for:

- Topical news releases relating to timely issues. The media is particularly interested in certain trends and your services, no matter what they are, can tie into one of those trends
- Community involvement releases sponsoring events or get-togethers
- Industry-specific projections and surveys that predict where a niche market is headed

Generating news and information that people and the press will be interested in is not as difficult as it may sound. All you have to do is ask, "What does my target audience care about?" It will help to focus your thoughts and ideas. Conducting some research on a specific topic or question will help you get the answer.

Books about PR will urge you to send press releases but many journalists ignore press releases. They are inundated with press releases. They may, however, pay attention to a list of bullet points which cover the salient points of your story. You could also try calling first to gauge their interest (but check their deadlines before you call – you'll get a much better response if you make contact a long way before the deadline).

Another way to boost your profile is to write a book or report. Self-publishing is as valid as being published by a mainstream publisher.

When you start to put these techniques into action, you can really boost the amount of publicity your company and its product or service gets.

Key Marketing Strategy #10

Master social media

Social media, which includes blogging, using social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook, using social bookmarking like Digg, StumbledUpon and Del.icio.us, article marketing, and podcasting, makes it very simple to reach hundreds or thousands of people simultaneously and gives you an opportunity to influence how those people perceive you and your product or service.

It's also a low-cost and very effective way to promote your products and services, network and prospect for sales leads, increase your website traffic, boost your organic search engine rankings, boost your brand awareness, perform customer research and monitor your competition.

To get the most out of social media, you need to interact in the way other people want. Hard-sell tactics don't work in social media. Instead, you need to think of what you can provide to add value to the lives of the people in your social media networks. In other words, you need to give them high-quality content that is useful and interesting. This way, they will begin to recognise your expertise in a given area. This will help position you as an 'expert'.

Share a diverse range of links related to your area of expertise with your followers which will prove your value and encourage them to pay attention to what you provide.

Allocate a fixed amount of time each day to social media. Test your responses. If you're not getting a good return on your time investment, stop doing it and move onto another lead generation strategy.

Cultivate inbound links to your content to help your site gain authority and trust, (and to get better Google search rankings which in turn will help you to be found by potential clients who are using search to find products or services that you offer).

Follow-up the responses you get with autoresponders, etc.

Key Marketing Strategy #11

Convince People To Buy From You With A Rock-Solid USP

Your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is the unique position that your company holds in the minds of your potential and existing customers. That position determines whether or not your potential customers will choose to do business with you. A USP is not a catchy slogan – it's crucial to your business success: without an effective USP, people will never know why they should do business with you.

10 Ways To Define Your USP

As varied as positioning statements may be in tone and content, they generally fall into one of 10 main categories:

1. Low Price

Guaranteeing the lowest price has been used as a USP for many merchants. However, cutting profit margins too deeply is rarely healthy for a business or product. So, unfortunately, many who have chosen low price for a USP are no longer in business. The philosophy is low margins, but high volume.

If your business is small, however, you run the risk of setting off a price war. Larger players in your market who, due to economies of scale, can afford to match or beat your prices short term can easily force you out of the market long term. So think twice before focusing on price.

2. High Quality

The high quality USP is based on a high margin, lower volume philosophy. This USP is often found hand in hand with other USPs such as "Superior Service" and "Strongest Guarantee".

3. Superior Service

Providing superior customer service is a wonderful way to add value as well as develop long-term customer loyalty. So superior service is an excellent USP. What I am talking about here is the "above and beyond" type of customer service. To surpass the competition, you must go beyond simply satisfying customers, you have to AMAZE them.

4. Size/Selection

Providing the largest selection of items can be a powerfully effective USP. The classic example of this is Amazon.com. For years Amazon's USP was "Earth's Biggest Bookstore".

5. Convenience

By removing as many obstacles to ordering, receiving or using your product or service as possible, you are placing the customers' convenience at the centre of your business model. The "convenience" USP is based on centring your business on your customers' needs.

6. Knowledgeable Advice, Recognised Authority

This type of USP communicates the idea that, "I am the top in my field. You can trust my knowledge and experience." It works well for professionals and other skill or service-based organisations.

7. Customisation/Most Options

'Personalised' is a powerful option in a mass market world. That makes the offer of more options and custom-building to individual specifications powerfully alluring in a USP.

8. Speed

The speed at which your product or service is delivered can be a powerful USP in today's fast-paced world. Offering overnight or second day shipping as your standard service can give you a strong competitive advantage.

9. New and Unique

Sometimes your product is so new and unique that the product itself is the USP. Being the original or first mover in the market is a USP that nobody can duplicate. Inevitably, a competitor will emerge with a knock-off or copy of your product, but until then, you can promote the newness and uniqueness of your product as the USP.

When the competition heats up, you can switch your USP so that it positions your business as the 'first' or 'original' one of its kind.

10. Strongest Guarantee

A clear, strong guarantee turns what is assumed into what is assured. Your goal is to make your guarantee so strong that it makes what your competition offers seem stingy by comparison.

Transforming Your USP Into Customer Benefits

Selection, price, guarantee – these can all be part of your USP and your extended "brand identity". The following examples should be used as springboards to help you create a benefit-rich positioning statement that zeroes in on a key need of your target market:

USP Based on Size/Selection

Let's say that you have a clothing store that offers unusual selection or choice options for your industry. Your USP might read something like this:

"XYZ clothing store has the greatest selection in the area in comfy down coats with more than 203 in stock. We have a colourful and exciting selection of Levi and Wrangler jeans. There are over 357 pairs in stock with five different colours in maroon, blue, black, grey, and beige to choose from. We have exclusive distribution rights to "X" brand of clothing. No one else in the area has it! We have the largest selection of

women's shoes with over six quality brands and 217 pairs in stock."

This should motivate someone to visit your shop.

USP Based on Guarantee

If your USP is in the area of your guarantee, it might read:

"At XYZ Company we believe in assuming full responsibility for all of our products. No other company has a broader guarantee! If you are not completely satisfied, you may return your purchase at any time for a complete refund. This guarantee is on every product we sell."

This USP is an interesting one because most companies will only offer limited warranties and the guarantees of the manufacturer. The common belief is that the customer will take advantage of it and you'll begin losing money. The more likely scenario, however, is that the appeal is much greater than the risk for the consumer, and so it becomes a profitable unique selling proposition.

There are more people who do business with you because of the guarantee than people who actually take advantage of it.

USP Based on Price Benefit

If your USP is a pricing or discounting proposition, it might be something like the following:

"At XYZ Company, we have the same products as company A or company B. But we sell them at 30% to 50% less. This is because we have an overhead that is approximately 50% less than that of our competitors. Because of our building location and the design of our facilities, we are able to keep costs at a minimum. We also purchase in greater volume than our competitors to make sure we can provide you with the lowest price possible."

USP Based on Service

Perhaps your business is unique because of the service you provide. Then you need a service-oriented USP. The following might be an example:

"At XYZ Car Repair Facility, we are so concerned about the maintenance of your vehicle that we keep track of your maintenance schedule on our computer. We know exactly what your vehicle's recommended maintenance schedule is, and we call you to remind you to come in.

"We also enter in all of the work done on your vehicle and indicate those areas of recommended service in the future. We enter that into our computer and then invite you back when the time comes to have those other services performed. No other maintenance facility is this concerned with your car. We want to make certain at XYZ Car Repair Facility that your costs in owning a vehicle are kept to a minimum and that can be achieved with regular maintenance. Over the last eight years, we have determined that doing business with us has saved our average customer between £500 and £1,000 in unnecessary repairs."

Key Marketing Strategy #12

Get traffic to your website

You need to give people a compelling reason to visit your website (or special web page called a 'landing page'). You can do this by making them an offer so enticing, they'll ignore all the other demands on their attention and happily type in your website address.

What kind of offer? It depends on what really interests the people in your target market. What problems do they face? What keeps them awake at night?

Once you know what challenges them the most, create a simple product or service that can help them to solve that problem. You could for example, offer them a free downloadable report, a small tips booklet, a free teleseminar, a free DVD. Find out what they want and the way they like it to be delivered and then create it.

When you've created your free product or service, you need to let your prospective customers know about it and tell them exactly how and where they can obtain it.

There are hundreds of ways you can generate traffic (attract visitors) to your website (or special web page called a 'landing page'). Some methods are faster and more effective than others.

Some you'll have to pay for (like online adverts such as Google AdWords or adverts or inserts in printed newspapers or magazines).

Other methods will cost you very little. They include writing articles or press releases for offline publications or for other people's online ezines or blogs. You could ask other people to send emails telling their subscribers about your free offer, with a link that opens directly onto your website or landing page.

Capture contact information

Once your visitors arrive at your landing page or website, make sure you have a way to capture their email address so that you can send follow-up emails (and start to build a relationship with them). Depending on the value of the offer, you might also be able to get full name, mailing address, and other information to build your in-house database.

Key Marketing Strategy #13

Dominate Google and earn first page ranking

Master Keywords

Keywords are the exact words or phrases that Internet users type into search engines such as Google, Yahoo, or MSN to find the web pages containing the product or services and information they're looking for on the Internet.

The idea is that you incorporate the most popular of those relevant keywords or phrases into every aspect of your website so that when someone types in that phrase, hey presto, your website pops up the next time someone searches for a product or service like yours! Keywords are the difference that makes the difference... get them wrong and you may as well close up shop today because no one will find your website. Get them right and you can expect to have a massive increase in the number of qualified visitors to your site.

When someone searches for a keyword(s), the search engines retrieve a list of related web pages and display them in a 'relevancy' or 'best-match' order. In other words, the pages that best match the keywords are ranked highest on the list. Be aware that every search engine or directory has a different method for ranking webpage relevancy – and that those methods can change on a whim (or so it seems)! It's crucial that you take a lot of time considering your keywords before you submit them. Put yourself in your customer's mind: what words would they use to find a product or service like yours? [You can find the most popular search terms via key word discovery].

Use the most popular keyword or phrase in the title of your website, your URL and in the first and last paragraph of your

website. Use the top 10 keyword terms or phrases through the rest of your copy.

Achieve High Search Engine Ranking

Your website must be designed so that it achieves a high ranking in search engines. That will help drive traffic to your website. The more dominant your search engine presence, the more potential qualified clients you attract.

The point of search engine marketing is to achieve high rankings in the major search engines for keyword phrases that are specific to your company's product or service. Choose different variations of keywords and keyword phrases that potential visitors will use when performing a search. It's important to choose keywords that not only result in more traffic to your site but lead to conversion and sales. Keyword research is therefore vital.

Besides keywords (meta tags), your design, text, title and image alt tags are also important. Your title should contain your most important keyword or phrase that potential customers will use when searching.

If you don't use the keywords that you placed within your meta tags through your text, search engines will ignore them. Aim to use your keyword phrases at least three times but no more than 10 times in your text.

Key Marketing Strategy #14

Master email marketing

Email is still one of the cheapest and yet most effective marketing tools that you can use to communicate directly with your prospective, existing and past clients. You can respond immediately to their request for information, you can contact old clients, communicate with your existing clients, distribute press releases, and send invitations to prospects to visit your website, and alert prospects and clients alike about new products or services, sales, discounts, seminars, special events, and boot camps, etc. However, the low cost-high returns and convenience of email marketing means that many other businesses are using it for the same reason. The results: your prospects' and customers' inboxes get clogged up and all but a few messages are deleted without being read.

Your challenge therefore is to create email messages that stand out amid the clutter of those crowded email boxes and that get opened, read and acted upon. What's a typical open rate? A Marketing Professionals survey recently showed an industry open rate average of less than 20%, and many marketers report that open rates are declining. B2B open rates, however, are higher with many B2B marketers reporting rates of 30% or higher.

Increase your Open Rate

If people don't even open your emails, you'll never accomplish your goal, whether that goal is to stimulate a conversation, to educate, to create brand awareness, to sell, to invite or to complain, according to Opt-In News.

What is an open rate and how is it calculated? An open rate is intended to show the number (percentage) of people who actually opened your email and looked at it. If it isn't opened, it will never be read.

You know you'll never get 100% of recipients to open your emails. However, you can monitor from one email campaign to the next whether there's a difference in open rates. If it rises, you know you've got things right. If it falls, you know there's a problem. The calculation for open rates varies: some systems might use the number of emails opened divided by the number of emails sent, or the number of emails opened divided by the number of emails received. Whatever system you use, stick with it. That way you'll get an idea of changes in open rates over time.

How To Improve Your Open Rate

There are things you do have control over that can help you increase your open rate: the 'from' field, the subject line, and the timing.

1. Customise your 'from' field for maximum recognition

Take advantage of the customisable 'from' field in most emails.

2. Personalise Your Emails

Organisations that use email personalisation techniques achieve 57% higher average order values than those who send generic emails to everyone on their mailing list.

3. Personalise The Email Subject Line

Writing personalised subject lines (which use the name of the recipient) almost doubles the likelihood of your email being opened.

4. Experiment with your subject line

Try different subject lines and see what works best. Some experts recommend using numbers in the subject line to increase readership and response rates.

5. Keep your subject line short and snappy

Two reasons here: (1) many email clients limit the subject line to about 30 characters anyway, and (2) it's just good marketing sense to make your point in as few words as possible.

6. Know your readers and tune your subject line to them
Industry standards convey that most men prefer subject lines that communicate news or compelling information, while most women prefer discount offers. Leverage current market research to fine-tune your subject line.
7. Send your email to yourself
Send an email to yourself and pretend you are one of your readers. How does it look in your inbox? Would you open it?
8. Make it easy to 'white list' your emails
Consider including a common word, perhaps your newsletter name, in square brackets [Splash] at the beginning of your subject line so readers can use a filter based on that word, or clear your emails with IT or their ISP, to avoid sending your emails into the spam bucket.
9. Be aware of timing
If you publish your email in the early hours of the morning, it will appear in your recipients' in-boxes first thing in the morning along with possibly hundreds of other emails. If you publish too late in the day, you run the risk that your recipient will delete it in the rush to leave the office. Ask your readers what time is best for them.

Key Marketing Strategy #15

Get a steady stream of testimonials

You can attract or 'catch' more clients by collecting testimonials from your customers and using them in your marketing materials (both online and offline). It lets your customers do the talking and convincing for you and your business. If possible, include the customer's photograph, their real name, position within their company and location. That way, prospects can see that the testimonials are genuine.

Some testimonials aren't particularly useful: they're the ones that say "Wow! Your company's great!" Ask customers to go into detail about how your product or service has improved or benefited their lives.

For example, someone might go on an investment training course and say: "When I first came on your investment training course I was £5,000 in debt. However, after using the advice I am now £10,000 in credit after paying off all my credit cards and I now have a bright future ahead of me because I now know that I'm in control of my financial destiny." Compare that with the run-of-the-mill testimonial that says, "Fantastic!" Which has more credibility?

Build up the layers of detail. A testimonial that just says: "This product is absolutely brilliant" with the person's initials underneath, is not very powerful. The business owner should have asked for the testimonial and explained it was going to be used on their website and in their marketing material and was going to be read by other people.

Most people don't use testimonials effectively and therefore they don't see the impact they can have. But if you get the right testimonials from the right people, it builds respect, prestige and your professionalism. It elevates you in the eyes of the person reading the testimonial. They say, "Well, if this person says she's good, she must be good!"

The key is to get testimonials about different aspects of your service or product. If you get a whole range of testimonials saying the same thing it reinforces the point but ideally what you want to see is them coming from different angles. So have:

- One testimonial saying what great service you provide
- One testimonial talking about the quality of the materials
- One testimonial saying how easy you are to do business with
- One testimonial talking about the value for money your product or service provides
- One testimonial talking about the outcome derived from using your product or service and how it exceeded your customers' expectations
- One testimonial saying how much your customers have recommended your products or service to their friends and family members
- One testimonial saying, "I've tried other companies products or other companies services and they don't measure up to yours".

Have a range of testimonials to endorse what you do from every single angle. Think of it as a CAT scan providing clarity from every single angle and providing absolute transparency so there is no doubt in anyone's mind.

Key Marketing Strategy #16

Use telemarketing to bring in more business

Although it is often maligned and frequently misunderstood, telemarketing is one of the fastest growing forms of direct marketing today. It provides an opportunity to make one-to-one contact with the prospective buyer at a very low cost.

With the cost of hiring salespeople, training them, and getting them into the field, more companies will find the value in telemarketing.

Telemarketing can be used to take orders over the phone, following up direct mail or direct media advertising. Products ranging from 25-pence fasteners to £10 million aeroplanes are sold over the phone.

Telemarketing can be used to:

- Expand your current customer base
- Improve the monetary amount per sale
- Improve your company's customer service image
- Provide an opportunity for follow-up sales
- Generate leads for outside salespeople
- Sell a product directly over the phone
- Provide an incoming service for people to request additional information

Most businesses will not get this aggressive in telemarketing, but more and more, small businesses are realising its potential.

Prospect Qualifying

Telemarketing can be effective in calling from a cold list and screening those prospects that would not be interested in your product. Then only those qualified can be followed up

with a mail campaign or with a phone call from an outside salesperson. You can take time to qualify the prospect as to interest level, time period for purchases of products like yours, and income and age qualifiers.

What a great way to make contact and appeal for additional sales! If only one out of 10 agree to additional products – and if your telesales team is good, it will be more than one in 10 – you can see how a telemarketing campaign can greatly increase sales.

Telemarketing with Direct Mail Follow-Up

Direct mail by itself can receive anywhere from a 3% to 5% response. When included with a telemarketing follow up however, response has been as high as 25% to 30%. Direct mail can generate incoming telemarketing calls and the operators or salespeople can contact prospects after initial literature has been sent out (the double whammy).

One of the best uses of telemarketing is for a small business that has a customer base they are working with.

Retail salespeople can be used during slow times to make follow-up phone calls to the priority customer base. Salespeople can be assigned certain customers (who become the personal responsibility of those salespeople). The sales team can then follow up 'their' customer contacts regularly.

Each mailing that goes out and each promotion announced presents a new telemarketing opportunity.

A great advantage of telemarketing is that the business owner can combine it with a direct mail test on a small scale. Prior to any direct mail test, a phone script can be developed which will test the interest in the marketplace. If there is an interest in the survey of the product offering, then a direct mail test would be warranted.

Key Marketing Strategy #17

Use a three-step marketing approach

A one-step marketing approach is attempting to make an immediate sale with an advertisement, sales letter, or other promotion. The prospective customer must make an immediate buying decision. He or she must either purchase the product or the service, or not. If the customer decides not to buy and leaves, you have lost the opportunity to develop and nurture an on-going relationship with them. You've in effect lost not just the first sale but future sales.

A more effective method of selling is to use three steps in the selling process. Step one is to make contact with the prospect and offer valuable information for free in return for their contact details. Step two is to build a relationship with your prospect through regular contact (sales letters and emails) that continue to offer value. Step three is to nurture the relationship until the prospect is comfortable enough with you and your organisation to buy your product or service.

Key Marketing Strategy #18

Use back-end and front-end marketing

Once you've overcome your prospects' resistance to buy from you, it's crucial that you continue to nurture the relationship so they keep buying your products and sales.

Keep providing them with useful, relevant information and occasionally offering them opportunities to buy more advanced products or services.

You can boost your sales by also offering up-sell, cross-sell, even down-sell opportunities (if they opt out of one of your more expensive products or services, you can offer them something cheaper).

Key Marketing Strategy #19

Encourage people to climb the Marketing Ladder

If you want people to buy your product or service, you must give something away first.

People buy when they know, like and trust you or your company.

Many business owners mistakenly assume that 'window shopping' prospects will be prepared to hand over truckloads of cash for high priced products or services without any prior experience or knowledge of the product or service being offered but they need more much more.

You must woo your prospects, offering them low or no cost samples, then something that is a little bit more expensive and so on until they are familiar enough with you and your company to consider your highest priced products. Doing it this way makes purchase decisions easier.

As the relationship between you and your prospect develops, the objections he or she may have had initially begin to disappear.

To make the process easy, you need to have a range of products or services at different prices so prospects can gradually move toward the more expensive range at a pace that makes them comfortable.

One way to visualise this process is to imagine a group of nervous people standing at the foot of a ladder, anxious about taking the first step on the ladder. You need to gently encourage them to place their feet on the first rung and then the next (and you do that by offering them something for free that will be of great interest to them). Gradually, as they develop their trust in you (and your products or services) they'll move quite happily up the ladder (and buy your more expensive level of products and services).

The number of people will decrease as the ladder gets higher (and the price of your products or services increases). That's okay – although the number of clients is smaller, the amount of cash generated is the greatest.

The top of the ladder is where you want to get as many prospects as you can.

Key Marketing Strategy #20

Reverse the perceived risk for your customers

People have a strong resistance to buy and it doesn't matter how good your product or service is, you still need to deal with their natural scepticism. You have to overcome their resistance. The more you do to put prospective customers at ease, the more they will buy from you.

The main way to lower prospects' resistance is to reverse that risk onto yourself. That means offering an unconditional money-back guarantee. Let them know that if for whatever reason they don't like your product or service, you'll send them their money back. You won't make it difficult for them to get a refund – they won't have to jump through endless hoops or fill out a million forms. You'll send their money back, pronto.

The longer the guarantee period, the more comfortable people will feel about buying from you.

Another way to allay your customers' fears is to offer them the opportunity to 'try now, pay later'. You promise to begin charging their credit card only after a certain period of time – 30 days, for example – so they have the opportunity to test it before they pay a thing.

Or you could let them know that they only have to pay if your product or service delivers on your promise.

Lessen buyers' resistance by making it easier to purchase your product or service – give them multiple payment methods – early bird discounts, PayPal, credit or debit cards, bank cheque, payment plans, etc.

If your offer includes enticing bonuses, make it clear that your buyers can keep them even if they ask for a refund. These bonuses should be low cost to you but high perceived value to the customer. So, it's important that when you make the

offer, you put a monetary value on the bonuses (for example, 'You'll also receive this special bonus report worth £97 absolutely free and it's yours to keep – no matter what').

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£13.99 \$20.00

ISBN 978-0956619228



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